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ABSTRACT

One of six related documents, making up a U.S. Air Force correspondence course, this publication deals with effective writing and emphasizes the sentence as the basic unit of written communication. Part one focuses on internal sentence punctuation and covers the use of the comma, semicolon, colon, period, capital, abbreviations, and numbers. Part two emphasizes the basic sentence and its contribution to the communication process, and covers the parts of speech, sentence form and content, transitional devices between and within sentences, and the planning, organizing, and developing of a paragraph. A self-help test on effective writing and the answer key are included. (EL)

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Course 8A

USAF Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy

ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

Volume 2 Supplement

EFFECTIVE WRITING

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THIS PUBLICATION HAS BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY COMPETENT PERSONNEL OF THE PREPARING COMMAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT DIRECTIVES ON DOCTRINE, POLICY, ESSENTIALITY, PROPRIETY, AND QUALITY.

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Introduction

THIS TEXT is about effective writing, and it deals primarily with the sentence as the basic unit of written communication. Throughout the text, the emphasis is on sentence construction and use because the ability to construct and to use effective sentences is a fundamental part of the ability to write actively.

This text is in two parts. Part One emphasizes internal sentence punctuation. The depth of coverage of this subject area is limited to those rules of punctuation most often violated by Air University writers.

Part Two emphasizes the basic sentence and its contribution to the communication process. The study of the sentence progresses from a brief review of the more critical sentence parts to a thorough evaluation of sentence construction and use. As a final part of the study of sentence use, the text evaluates the role of the sentence in paragraph development. It is in this part of the text that you are asked to construct and to evaluate paragraphs of your own design.

Throughout the text, you will make active responses to situations that are designed to improve your writing ability. The accuracy of your responses and, consequently, the improvement of your writing ability will depend upon your interest and attention to detail. After each active response that you make, the text provides you with either the correct response or a model response against which you may evaluate your own.

Part One begins on the next page.

part 1 PUNCTUATION AND MECHANICAL PROCEDURES IN SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

Introduction to Part One

IN THIS PART of the text, you will be studying internal sentence punctuation, the uses of capital letters, the forms and uses of abbreviations, and the forms and uses of cardinal and ordinal numbers. Research has shown that all of these subject areas are particularly troublesome to Air University writers.

Most of Part One is devoted to a study of internal sentence punctuation. These are the punctuation marks that are covered:

1. The comma
2. The semicolon
3. The colon
4. The period

To prepare you for the study of these selected punctuation marks, it is important for us to consider WHY some sentences require internal punctuation while others do not.

Here are two sentences, one of which effectively demonstrates the need for internal punctuation. Examine both of these sentences, and decide which of them requires internal punctuation. When you have decided, place a check mark (√) beside that sentence in the space provided.

☐ 1. Bernoulli's Principle states that an increase in the velocity of a fluid in a closed system produces a corresponding decrease in the pressure energy of that fluid because molecular energy is used for velocity rather than for pressure.

☐ 2. Bernoulli's Principle the principle of fluid dynamics states that an increase in the velocity of a fluid in a closed system produces a corresponding decrease in the pressure energy of that fluid because molecular energy is used for velocity rather than for pressure.

You probably noticed that sentence number two is longer than sentence number one. Its structure is also different. Are these sufficient reasons for its internal punctuation? Well, let's see. The internal punctuation in sentence two is required for one of the three reasons stated below. Check the response of your choice.

☐ 1. The second sentence is longer than the first sentence.

☐ 2. The structure of the second sentence is different from that of the first sentence.

☐ 3. The structure of the second sentence is more complicated than the first sentence in that it contains a qualifying element that the first sentence does not contain.

The number of qualifying elements in a sentence (clauses, phrases, modifiers, etc.) increases the structural complication of a sentence and, as a consequence, its need for internal punctuation. The correct response is number three, and the sentence in question requires commas after "Bernoulli's Principle" and after "dynamics." These commas set off "the principle of fluid dynamics," a non-restrictive parenthetical element. If you selected either the first or second response, let us caution you that neither length nor novelty of construction qualifies a sentence for internal punctuation.

Structural complication, then, is one of the principal reasons that some sentences require internal punctuation. There is another reason, however, that is almost as important as that of structural complication. The following sentences demonstrate this other reason for internal punctuation. Examine the following sentences carefully, and decide which of them requires internal punctuation. When you have decided, furnish the necessary punctuation by writing directly in the text.

1. Because the wing design did not provide enough lift the aircraft failed to meet the performance standards.

2. The aircraft failed to meet the performance standards because the wing design did not provide enough lift.

The sentences, as we are sure that you noticed, are precisely the same except for a modification in the sequence of parts. Since they are the same, neither is more structurally complicated than the other; therefore, internal punctuation for reasons of structural complication is not the case here. Then why the need for internal punctuation? Why would a writer modify the sequence of sentence parts, and, in doing so, create a requirement for internal punctuation? Would the reason be related to the logical presentation of ideas in the sentence, or is it some other reason unrelated to logic? Select a response to this question from the alternatives below.

☐ 1. The writer would construct a sentence in the form of sentence number one in order to control the emphasis within the sentence.

☐ 2. The writer would construct a sentence in the form of sentence number one in order to have the presentation of his ideas more nearly approximate the logical order of spoken English.

The correct response is number one. Emphasis naturally falls on the beginning of a sentence; therefore, in sentence number one, the emphasis is on **why** the aircraft failed to meet the performance standards. In sentence number two, the emphasis is on the fact that the aircraft **failed** to meet the standards.

There you have the two fundamental reasons for internal punctuation, **structural complication** and **emphasis control.** We ask that you keep these two reasons for internal punctuation in mind as you progress through the text. As you punctuate sentences in Part One and write sentences in Part Two, you will be given numerous opportunities to demonstrate how well you understand them.

In this part of the text, in addition to punctuating sentences for the two reasons just covered, you will be practicing capitalization, the use of abbreviations, and certain other mechanical features of sentence construction. To assist you in gaining the maximum benefit from this practice, Part One is written in a programmed instructional style that is described below.

In Part One, there are a number of key exercises similar to this example:

Hercules who was the ice man on our block always gave us a ride on the back of the ice wagon.

It is obvious that this sample exercise requires commas after "Hercules" and after "block." If this were an actual key exercise, you would have been asked to furnish the necessary punctuation by writing directly in the text. You would then have been given the correct response against which you could check your performance.

The key exercises are furnished in this general form for the following reasons:

1. Each of them introduces the subject area that is to be covered,
2. Each of them serves as an example of the grammar rule being studied, and
3. Each of them serves as an indicator to you concerning your preliminary knowledge of the subject area.

After you have had an opportunity to respond to each key exercise, your response to the key exercise is confirmed. You are then given the rule that is demonstrated by the key exercise. The rule is followed by several practice exercises in its application.

As the text progresses from one subject area to the next, you are provided with a "self-test" item on the subject area just completed. This self-test item is designed in such a way as to provide you with a realistic estimate of your learning gain.

This completes the introduction to Part One. Instruction in the use of the comma begins on the next page.

The Use of the Comma

GRAMMAR TEXTS will tell you that a comma is the punctuation mark that is used to indicate the smallest break in continuity or thought within a sentence. Commas do this, and they do more. Quite literally, commas allow us to take a breath as we read; they permit us to pause and digest that which has gone before and to shift mental gears in preparation for that which is still to come.

The exercise that follows is your first key exercise in the use of commas. Follow the instructions carefully. In this exercise, we are establishing the response pattern that you will be using throughout most of Part One.

This key exercise **may** require one or more commas. Read the exercise, and, by writing directly in the text, furnish any commas that may be required.

Dealing the card shark of doubtful reputation palmed the ace of spades.

The rule in this case is to use a comma when it is necessary to separate two words that might otherwise be misunderstood if the comma is omitted. A comma is required after "Dealing." If the comma is omitted, "card shark" appears to be the object of "Dealing."

Here are your practice exercises in the application of this comma rule.

Place a comma in its correct position in each of the following sentences. The confirmation of your responses follows these practice exercises.

1. **To Whitney Smith was very kind.**
2. **Instead of cotton weeds grew.**
3. **What the problem was was not known.**
4. **The people rushed for the store was having a sale.**
5. **When the storm struck the farm was just beginning to pay.**
6. **As soon as the doctor left the waiting room was crowded.**
7. **After the tension of the game is over the team can relax.**

For the sentences to be more meaningful, commas belong after these words: 1. "Whitney," 2. "cotton," 3. the first "was," 4. "rushed," 5. "struck," 6. "left," and 7. "over."

The use of the comma just covered was a simple one. Here is a key exercise in a comma use that is not quite as easy. Read the key exercise carefully, and, if commas are required, furnish them.

The centralized system puts standards of living and personal consumption on a very low level of priority and value giving the consumer a choice of only one or two items of necessities and options in each of the several categories of essentials and non-essentials.

The fact that the key exercise is a long sentence does not automatically qualify it for commas. No commas are required. The sentence **looks** like a compound sentence, but it is not. If it were a compound sentence, it would contain two or more independent clauses, these clauses would be jointed by a coordinating conjunction (and, or, nor, but, etc.), and there would be a comma preceding the conjunction. The following example shows how this works.

He worked very hard, and he enjoyed his job.

independent clause *comma* *conjunction* *independent clause*

Independent clauses, as we are sure you know, are clauses that contain their own subjects (the subject may be implied) and their own verbs.

The following practice exercises are all compound sentences. Each of them will require one or more commas to meet the requirement of the rule just covered. Be sure to read the discussion that follows each exercise. In these exercises, place commas where they are required by writing directly in the text.

1. He fell but he wasn't hurt.

If you remember, the key exercise was long, but its length did not automatically qualify it for commas. This practice exercise is short, but that fact alone does not **disqualify** it for commas. The comma is required after "fell."

2. He went and we went but they stayed and she stayed.

That's a short sentence, but it has four independent clauses separated by coordinating conjunctions. You should have used three commas. The first comma goes after the first "went," the second comma goes after the second "went," and the third comma goes after the first "stayed."

3. Laugh and the world laughs with you. Stop and the world laughs on.

Each of the two sentences above contains two independent clauses. The fact that the verbs "laugh" and "stop" have no apparent subjects does not alter the rule. In each case, the subject is "you," and it is implied. "(You) laugh, and the world laughs with you. (You) stop, and the world laughs on."

4. Modern technology is fighting for its life and it is defeating a dying humanism.

5. Foreign policy is inconsistent but it is necessary.

We grouped these two sentences together for a particular reason. Notice the use of "it is" in each of the sentences. It would be just as easy to write these sentences this way:

4. Modern technology is fighting for its life and * defeating a dying humanism.

5. Foreign policy is inconsistent but * necessary.

If the sentences were written that way, they would not require commas. By including the "it is" in the original sentences, we have furnished an additional subject and verb, and (we) caused them to become compound sentences requiring commas. In sentence four, the comma goes after "life." In sentence five, the comma goes after "inconsistent." The use of the additional "it is" gives added emphasis to the last part of the sentence. It is perfectly acceptable to write with emphasis, but (you) be sure the resulting punctuation is equally acceptable.

6. And I have fought and I shall fight again.

The preceding sentence is an example of an oratorical style of writing. We don't recommend it because this style of writing requires a more thorough knowledge of the English language than most of us possess. The comma goes after "fought."

Some grammar texts say that it is not necessary to use commas in "short" compound sentences. They neglect to say, however, how long a sentence must be to qualify as being "short." In the absence of better guidance than that, our advice to you is to stick with the rule.

Here is another key exercise in the use of commas. Read the exercise carefully, and punctuate it if required.

He had ham and eggs toast and jelly heartburn and static from his wife for breakfast.

This exercise is an example of items in series. The rule states that a comma is used after each member of the series when the series is used with "and," "or," or "nor." Some texts say that the comma *preceding* the "and," "or," or "nor" is not required, but Air Force writing guides say to use it. So use it.

In the key exercise, "ham and eggs" is a collective object, and a comma follows "eggs." The same is true of "toast and jelly." The comma follows "jelly." "Heartburn" and "static from his wife" do not, however, function as a collective. A comma is required after "heartburn." No comma is required after the *last* member of the series which, in this case, is "static from his wife."

The following exercises are examples of items in series. Place commas where required according to the rule.

1. **The Christmas season brought good cheer fellowship and unpaid bills.**

Commas are required after "cheer" and "fellowship."

2. **Hooray for the red white and blue.**

Commas are required after "red" and "white."

3. **There is a store down the block where you can buy your cold drinks by the bottle by the case or by the gallon.**

This is a series used with "or." Commas are required after "bottle" and "case."

4. **Neither rain sleet nor snow could keep us from being there on time.**

In that sentence, "nor" is used with items in series. Commas are required after "rain" and "sleet."

5. **I missed problems numbered 11 14 21 and 23.**

Numbers in series, whether written out or expressed as figures, require commas according to the same rule. Commas should be placed after "11," "14," and "21."

6. **The typical woman's purse is filled with things like loose coins of small denomination hair pins or bobby pins undecipherable notes to herself assorted cosmetics in or out of their containers combs and hair brushes and sundry items of doubtful value and even more doubtful utility.**

When punctuating long and complex lists of items in series, be careful to correctly identify each member of the series. Commas are required in this exercise after "denomination," "bobby pins," "herself," "containers," and "brushes."

The next key exercise combines two uses of the comma. There is one that you will recognize immediately, the use of the comma with items in series. The other use, however, is the real purpose of this key exercise.

Here is the key exercise. Place commas in all positions where they are required.

> **Trees like men women children eggs sauerkraut banana peels bread and butter baked beans and leftover lamb stew are or once were alive.**

The two rules of comma use in this key exercise are as follows:

1. The comma rule for items in series used with "and," "or," or "nor."
2. The comma rule for parenthetical matter.

The comma rule for parenthetical matter is the one we are most concerned with in this exercise. This rule requires that words not necessary to the main thought or to the grammatical pattern of the sentence be considered parenthetical matter and be set off from the rest of the sentence with commas. This rule requires a comma after "Trees" and after "stew."

The other commas in the exercise are required by the item in series rule. These commas are required after "men," "women," "children," "eggs," "sauerkraut," "peels," "butter," and "beans."

Because of the parenthetical matter in the key exercise, it could have been written like this without changing its meaning:

Trees are or once were alive.

This sentence form eliminates all of the material between those commas that set off the parenthetical matter. It is interesting to note that the sentence could not be further reduced to the form below without seriously altering its meaning.

Trees are, or once were, alive.

If we were to treat "or once were" as parenthetical matter, we have, in effect, said that "Trees are alive." That statement is invalid because not all trees are alive.

The following practice exercises require commas to set off parenthetical matter. Punctuate each sentence as required.

1. This time regardless of what happens we will do it right.

The commas are required after "time" and after "happens." An effective test for parenthetical matter is to read each sentence aloud without the element. Another good test is to mentally enclose the element in parentheses. If the sentence remains basically the same after doing these things, the element is parenthetical matter, and it should be set off with commas.

2. You look as though you doubt what I say and I don't blame you so go see for yourself.

The commas are required after "say" and after "blame you."

3. Thomas naturally was the last person to arrive.

Short parenthetical elements like "naturally," "of course," "incidentally," and "undoubtedly" are almost always set off by commas. The commas in the previous exercise go after "Thomas" and after "naturally."

The parenthetical elements that you have been working with in the previous exercises, those that are not essential to sentence meaning, are called **non-restrictive** parenthetical elements. If they had been essential to sentence meaning or construction, they would have been **restrictive** parenthetical elements, and they would not have required commas. Here is an exercise with another parenthetical element. You are to decide if it is **restrictive** or **nonrestrictive.** Punctuate the sentence accordingly.

4. Charles hit John while John was standing next to him.

The punctuation of this sentence depends upon how you treat "while John was standing next to him." If that was a factor contributing to John's being hit, it is **restrictive,** and no commas are required. If, however, John's standing next to Charles was only incidental to John's being hit, a comma is required because the element is **non-restrictive.**

In the exercises that follow, we want to demonstrate that, as so often happens, the TOTAL narrative of which the sentence is a part will determine whether the parenthetical element is restrictive or non-restrictive.

In the sentence that follows, we are talking about **apple pies.** Suppose that some previous narrative, of which this sentence is a part, has already established that the apple pie in the sentence is only *one of many apple pies* located in various places about the kitchen. One of the apple pies has been stolen. Read the sentence, and decide if commas are required.

5. The apple pie that was on the window ledge has been stolen.

Did you include any commas? You should not have because "that was on the window ledge" is not a parenthetical element. It is necessary for the correct identification of the stolen apple pie from all of the apple pies located about the kitchen.

In the next sentence, we are speaking about the same kitchen. This time, however, there are several kinds of pies around. There is only one apple pie. It shares the window ledge with a mince pie and a blueberry pie. Punctuate this sentence if required.

6. The apple pie that was on the window ledge has been stolen.

Since there was only one apple pie, "that was on the window ledge" is not necessary to identify the apple pie. It becomes non-restrictive, and it should be set off with commas.

7. By the way did you know that I have a new baby brother?

The comma is required after "way." The parenthetical element, as this sentence shows, does not have to be buried within the sentence. Obviously, it can come at the beginning. It can also come at the end of the sentence, incidentally.

The following key exercise demonstrates another use of the comma. Punctuate the exercise as required.

Although there are some texts that do not cover the requirement for using a comma after an introductory adverbial clause we will.

We were trying to see if you were paying attention. This key exercise is several things:

1. It is the rule for this use of commas,
2. It is an example of the rule, and
3. It is an exercise in the application of the rule.

It is the rule because it states that a comma is used after an introductory adverbial clause.

It is the example because except for the "we will" the entire sentence is one long introductory adverbial clause.

It is the exercise in the application of the rule, and you should have placed a comma after "clause."

Here are your practice exercises in this use of commas. Place commas where they are required.

1. Even though it snowed throughout the entire second half we enjoyed the game.

The comma is required after "half."

2. Because of the need for precision the drill team practiced every day.

The comma is required after "precision."

In the same way that an introductory clause is followed by a comma, an introductory modifying phrase is set off from the subject that it modifies by a comma. Here are a couple of examples of this type of phrase. Place commas where they are needed.

1. Angered by his friends he went into seclusion.

The comma goes after "friends." If this sentence were turned around and written as follows, there would be no need for commas.

He went into seclusion because he was angered by his friends.

2. Though tired we had to continue.

Some grammar texts say that a comma is not required after "tired" in the sentence above. These texts argue that a "short" introductory phrase or clause does not have to be followed by a comma. You may use your own judgment in these cases; however, the jury is still out on what constitutes "short," "middle-sized," or "long." At what size, for example, does a puddle become a pond and a pond become a lake?

One of the greatest features of written English is its extreme flexibility. If you are faced with a problem in punctuation, recast the sentence in one form and then another until you derive a punctuation of which you are sure.

The following is the final key exercise in the use of the comma. This exercise consists of two sentences that are alike in many ways. Each of them contains adjectives modifying "day," but only one of them requires a comma between these adjectives. Punctuate one of the sentences as required.

He woke up to a cold windy day.
He woke up to a threatening winter day.

One of the sentences contains **parallel** adjectives, and one of them does not. The rule is this: when the adjectives are parallel, that is, when they are equal in value and purpose, a comma is used between them. The first sentence above contains the parallel adjectives, and a comma is required after "cold."

A valid test of parallel adjectives is to turn the adjectives around, that is, to put one before the other. Another test is to insert "and" between them. If, after doing either of these things, the sentence still makes sense, the adjectives are parallel, and a comma is required between them. Let's try it with the sentences in the key exercise.

He woke up to a windy cold day. That sounds O.K.

He woke up to a cold and windy day. It still sounds O.K.

He woke up to a threatening and winter day. Sounds pretty bad.

He woke up to a winter threatening day. That sounds terrible.

Here are your practice exercises in this use of commas. Place the commas where required in the following exercises.

1. So the mean old witch offered sweet little Snow White a large tasty apple so she would get a bad old tummyache.

The commas are required after "mean," "sweet," and "large." No comma goes after "bad" because these adjectives are not parallel. Put them to both of the tests that we discussed, and you will see.

2. It means an untimely sudden death to be trapped under the hot desert sun.

The comma goes after "untimely." No comma goes after "hot."

3. She wore a tight silk dress to the office party.

These adjectives are not parallel. No comma is required.

4. The machine was covered with dirty red oxide and black sticky tar.

The adjectives in "dirty red oxide" are not parallel. "Black" and "sticky" are parallel, and a comma is required between them.

5. He walked down the old country lane.

The adjectives are not parallel. No comma is required.

With this, we conclude the coverage of these critical comma rules. These are not all of the rules covering comma usage, to be sure, but these are the ones most often violated by students at Air University schools.

Go on to the next page for a review of all of the rules that we have covered. After the review, you will have an opportunity to complete a comprehensive exercise in comma usage.

Review of the Comma Rules

1. **Commas are required when there is a need to separate two words that might otherwise be misunderstood.**

   Use the comma for it can be of great help in preventing misreading.
   ↑

2. **Commas are required to separate two or more independent clauses in a sentence. The commas precede each coordinating conjunction.**

   This sentence contains two independent clauses and a comma is required.
   ↑

3. **Commas are used after each member in a series used with "and," "or," or "nor."**

   The uses of commas are many varied and frequently implausible.
   ↑ ↑

4. **Parenthetical expressions that are not considered necessary to the thought and pattern of the sentence are non-restrictive and, as such, are set off with commas.**

   Non-restrictive parenthetical elements naturally should be set off with commas.
   ↑ ↑

5. **Introductory adverbial clauses are followed by a comma.**

   When opening a sentence with an adverbial clause use a comma.
   ↑

6. **Commas are used between parallel adjectives.**

   Commas are difficult annoying punctuation marks.
   ↑

Self-Test Item on Comma Usage

This exercise is provided so that you may check your knowledge of the rules of comma usage covered in this text. Read the exercise carefully, and furnish all commas that are required. When you have completed the exercise, check your responses below.

A comma is a mark of punctuation but a coma is a mark of illness. Instead of commas comas cause a comatose state but commas rather than comas may cause a confused state. If commas cause confusion consternation and complications rework this text and rethink your clever captivating thoughts. Keep your comma calm and avoid a comma coma.

Here is the confirmation of the exercise above.

A comma is a mark of punctuation, but a coma is a mark of illness. Instead of commas, comas cause a comatose state, but commas rather than comas, may cause a confused state. If commas cause confusion, consternation, and complications, rework this text, and rethink your clever, captivating thoughts. Keep your comma calm, and avoid a comma coma.

The Use of the Semicolon

THE SEMICOLON is a much misunderstood and much abused punctuation mark. The most common errors in the use of the semicolon are these:

1. It is often used instead of the comma when a comma will serve.
2. It is often omitted when it should not be. In these cases, a comma is often substituted.
3. It is often used as a substitute for a colon, although the uses of the colon and the semicolon are entirely different.

Well, if those are the kinds of errors made in semicolon usage, then what **are** the proper uses of the semicolon? Suppose you tell us. Select one of the responses below that best describes the use of the semicolon.

☐ 1. It is a mark of anticipation. Its use indicates that more is coming.

☐ 2. It is the mark of separation to use when the degree of separation desired is greater than that indicated by a comma but not so great as that indicated by a period.

The last response is correct. The first response describes the primary function of the **colon.**

The semicolon is a mark of **separation.** It is stronger than the comma and only slightly less emphatic than the period. There have been serious suggestions that we stop calling the semicolon a semi**colon** and start calling it a semi**period.**

Keep these facts in mind:

1. The semicolon is a mark of **separation.**
2. The colon is a mark of **anticipation.**

Here is your first key exercise in the use of the semicolon. Here is what you are to do: you are to remove ONE key word from the sentence, and, in its place, you are to substitute a semicolon. In the spaces provided, rewrite the sentence to reflect this substitution.

We are all subject to jury duty and this is fair because we all have obligations of citizenship.

_____

_____

_____

The key exercise, as we are sure you recognized, is a compound sentence with the comma missing. We omitted the comma for clarity. You will remember that the independent clauses of a compound sentence are separated by a coordinating conjunction, and the conjunction is preceded by a comma. You should have removed the conjunction and rewritten the sentence this way:

We are all subject to jury duty; this is fair because we all have obligations of citizenship.

The rule is this: if, **for reasons of style**, there are independent clauses **not joined** by coordinating conjunctions, a semicolon must be used in the place of the missing conjunction and comma.

Here are your practice exercises in the application of this rule.

1. **We would like very much to go with you it is doubtful that we will be able to.**

There are two independent clauses in that sentence, and the comma and the coordinating conjunction "but" are missing. The sentence could have been written in any one of the following ways:

We would like very much to go with you; it is doubtful that we will be able to.

We would like very much to go with you, but it is doubtful that we will be able to.

We would like very much to go with you. It is doubtful that we will be able to.

Any one of the above forms is perfectly acceptable. It is a matter of choice and of style. Punctuate this sentence:

2. **A semicolon is used to separate independent clauses of a compound sentence it is used in the absence of the comma and the coordinating conjunction.**

The semicolon is required after "sentence."

3. **This is the end of the fiscal year it is a bad time to obligate additional funds.**

The semicolon is required after "year" to take the place of the comma and the coordinating conjunction "and."

4. **Strike now the time is ripe.**

A semicolon goes after "now," and it substitutes for the comma and the conjunction "for." It is interesting to note that the semicolon, when substituting for the conjunction "for," is serving another purpose as well. It is signaling a cause and effect relationship. This should be of particular interest to Air Force writers because they are called upon again and again to write about cause and effect relationships such as the following:

Order your supplies today; tomorrow may be too late.

Submit your recommendations; the promotion board meets soon.

Shop today; the commissary is closed tomorrow.

5. Get ready to listen to a sad story he hasn't had an attentive audience in weeks.

The semicolon goes after "story."

6. Good punctuation advances the cause of written communication poor punctuation confuses your reader.

The semicolon goes after "communication."

This is your second key exercise in the uses of the semicolon. This use is very closely related to the one just covered. Read the exercises carefully, and furnish the required semicolon.

She always had a good word for everyone however, the good word concealed an underlying disgust with people in general.

This is another compound sentence. It contains two independent but related clauses. The last clause is preceded by the parenthetical expression, "however." The semicolon is required before the "however."

The rule for this use of a semicolon states that a semicolon will precede parenthetical expressions such as "however," "although," and "consequently" when those expressions join two independent but related clauses. If that is not entirely clear to you, look at it this way:

You know that the independent clauses of a compound sentence are joined by a coordinating conjunction that is preceded by a comma. You also know that, when the coordinating conjunction and the comma are not used, a semicolon is used in their place. Now add to those facts the insertion of a non-restrictive parenthetical expression like "however." You know that expressions like these are always set off from the rest of the sentence with commas.

With these facts in mind, consider the sentence as though it were written like this:

She always had a good word for everyone, but, however, the good
↑ ↑ ↑
word concealed an underlying disgust with people in general.

That portion of the sentence marked by arrows is removed, and the semicolon, for the reasons previously given, is inserted in its place. The comma that remains, the one after "however," is there because "however" is a non-restrictive parenthetical expression.

Your practice exercises follow.

1. The Air Force is fast becoming a group of hard-core professionals therefore, promotion boards are becoming more selective.

The semicolon goes after "professionals," and it takes the place of the comma preceding a coordinating conjunction, the coordinating conjunction itself, and a comma preceding "therefore."

2. He should arrive around seven however, it is doubtful that he will.

The semicolon goes after "seven."

3. The commander selected his men carefully as a result, the mission went off without a hitch.

"As a result" is just another parenthetical expression, and the semicolon precedes this expression.

4. I know that you are busy nevertheless, you should find time for this worthy cause.

The semicolon precedes "nevertheless."

This is your last key exercise in the use of the semicolon. In this exercise, the required commas are furnished. You are to furnish all of the required semicolons. Please **do not** replace any of the commas with semicolons.

This programmed text explains the basic use of the comma, which is easy the use of the semicolon, which is a breeze the use of the colon, which is a snap the use of the period, which is the least troublesome of all sentence structure, which is reasonably simple paragraphing, which promises not to be too difficult and the use of the English language in effective writing, which, oddly enough, is extremely difficult.

This exercise requires the use of six semicolons. Did you place them all correctly? They go after "easy," "breeze," "snap," "all," "simple," and "difficult." The rule that covers this use of semicolons is an easy one. It is this:

The semicolon is used as the mark of separation (instead of commas) between sentence elements when these sentence elements contain commas within them.

Obviously, the above exercise is nothing more than items in series, but each member in the series contains internal commas. When this happens, semicolons are used in those places that are normally occupied by commas.

Your practice exercises in the application of this semicolon rule follow:

1. Today at the store I bought pears, which I like peaches, which I don't like lemons, which my wife likes bananas, which my wife doesn't like and sauerkraut, which no one in his right mind likes.

The semicolons go after each of the first four "likes."

2. On my last trip to the store, I bought apples, bananas, and pears corn, peas, and squash and beef, pork, and chicken.

If that exercise gave you trouble, look at it this way:

On my last trip to the store, I bought fruit (apples, bananas, and pears),
↑
vegetables (corn, peas, and squash), and meat (beef, pork, and chicken).
↑

With the exercise written that way, it becomes obvious that semicolons are required in the places indicated by arrows.

3. A career in electronics has much to offer the young man: first, good pay second, a chance to be creative third, the challenge of new and exciting discoveries and fourth, a secure future.

The semicolons go after "pay," "creative," and "discoveries."

Go on to the next page for a brief review of the semicolon rules that we have covered.

Review of the Semicolon Rules

1. **A semicolon is used to take the place of the comma and the coordinating conjunction between independent clauses when the comma and the conjunction are omitted.**

   We have not experienced real peace in many years; it is doubtful that we will again.

2. **The semicolon precedes short parenthetical expressions when these parenthetical expressions join independent but related thoughts.**

   Harry knew that his bills were overdue; however, he could not resist wasting his money.

3. **A semicolon is used as the mark of separation between sentence elements when these elements contain commas within them.**

   The city zoo was stocked with snakes, red, black, green, and striped; elephants, large and small, black, brown, and white; tigers, young and old, large and small, and man-eaters; and a straggly, ugly, bald monkey.

As you can tell from the preceding examples, the use of semicolons is largely a matter of style. You can write without the semicolon, but, to be a truly effective writer, you will need to use the semicolon at times.

Go on to your comprehensive exercise item that follows.

Self-Test Item on Semicolon Usage

In this item, both the commas and the semicolons are missing. Furnish both commas and semicolons, and check your responses below.

You may think English grammar is difficult however little children are using functional English every day. It is nothing short of amazing how they do this it is even more amazing given the manner in which English is taught in grade school that little children continue to use functional English and it will be most amazing to you that after you have completed this text functional English was ever anything but child's play.

Here is your confirmation for the above self-test. If you have any doubts about the way in which the puncutation marks are used, consult the review items on the previous page.

You may think English grammar is difficult; however, little children are using functional English every day. It is nothing short of amazing how they do this; it is even more amazing, given the manner in which English is taught in grade school, that little children continue to use functional English; and it will be most amazing to you that, after you have completed this text, functional English was ever anything but child's play.

Turn now to the uses of the colon that follows.

The Use of the Colon

YOU HAVE SEEN, in the previous exercises, that the semicolon is a mark of **separation.** The role of the colon is different; it is used as a mark of **anticipation.** Remember these basic rules of colon usage:

1. It is a mark of **anticipation,**
2. It is never used interchangably with the semicolon, and
3. Its use is usually **stylistic.**

Many uses of the colon are stylistic, and such uses can only be explained by saying "Well, that's just the way it is." Because there are so many uses of the colon that are explained in this way, we will confine our study of the colon to just one rule and a slight variation of that rule.

Here is your first key exercise in colon usage. Furnish the required colon.

Sergeant White is including the following examples as support for his report a survey of vehicle use, a cost analysis, and a maintenance report.

That type of construction clearly indicates the need for a colon as a mark of **anticipation.** The colon goes after "for his report."

The rule states that a colon is the proper mark to use before a series or list when the preceding statement contains or ends in an expression that points to what is to follow. In the key exercise, "the following examples" is just such an expression.

There is, however, an exception to this rule, and it is an important one. To teach that exception, we ask that you punctuate this modification of the key exercise. If a colon is required in this modification, place it in its correct position.

Sergeant White is including, for his report, examples such as a survey of vehicle use, a cost analysis, and a maintenance report.

At first glance, it appears that a colon is required after "such as." The colon should not be used here. The exception to the colon rule states the following:

The colon is **never** used if it will fall between a preposition and its object. In addition, it is **rarely** used if it will fall between a verb and its complement. To this we shall add: a colon is **never** placed between a form of the verb "to be" (is, are, was, were) and its complement.

Here are your practice exercises in the application of this rule. Place colons where required.

1. He visited the following cities Rome, Paris, Berlin, and Madrid.

The construction clearly indicates that more is coming. The colon is required after "cities."

2. Some recommended hobbies for the harassed businessman are golfing, bowling, and model railroading.

The colon is not used. Never allow a colon to fall between a form of the verb "to be" and its complement.

3. The typical child in underdeveloped countries is, by the time he is nine years old, stricken with dysentery, pellagra, and jaundice.

The colon is not required. Never allow a colon to fall between a preposition and its object.

In the next exercise, you see the rule at work under slightly different circumstances.

4. The motorcyclist's costume was an array of zippers two on each arm of his jacket, four down the jacket front, two on each trouser leg, and one on each side of his helmet to allow his sideburns to get a needed breath of fresh air.

That sentence is one of a type in which everything after the main clause is a series that complements the main clause. Although the main clause contains no obvious expression that points to what is to follow, the entire main clause serves to introduce the series that follows. A colon is required after "zippers."

Here is another key exercise in the use of the colon that is a slight variation of the rule just covered. Furnish a colon where required.

If a writer is not effective in his communication with the reader, one of two things will happen the reader will either lay the material aside in disgust or struggle through it with the possibility of misinterpreting the writer's meaning.

In the exercise above, the colon goes after "happen."

That key exercise is an example of the use of a colon between two independent clauses. This is NOT a common use of the colon, but, since it is so close to being the same situation in which a **semicolon** is used, we felt it necessary to include it in this text.

Think back, and you will remember that the semicolon is also used between two independent clauses, but **the semicolon** is used *when the comma and the coordinating conjunction are omitted.* In the preceding key exercise, no comma or coordinating conjunction was omitted. Instead, in these two clauses, **the second clause is an amplification of the first.** The rule is this: the colon is used between independent clauses **only** when the second clause is an amplification of the first clause, when it is a restatement of the first clause in different terms, or when it is an illustration of the first clause.

Continue with the practice exercises that follow. Furnish colons where they are required

1. **Jane Austen wrote two novels on which there is little agreement her most popular novel is *Pride and Prejudice*, although many critics argue that *Emma* is a better book.**

The second clause is an amplification of the first, and the colon goes after "agreement."

2. **The junior officer and the junior business executive have much in common each is a manager, and each is short on experience and long on responsibility.**

The colon goes after "common."

3. **Activities on base were severely limited the BX was closed; the commissary was closed; the bowling alley was closed; and, worst of all, the club bar was closed.**

The colon goes after "limited." Notice the use of semicolons in practice exercise number three.

4. **English punctuation marks pose a few problems the period can be difficult; the comma is rough; the colon is a drag; the semicolon can be impossible; and the proper use of these marks is, incidentally, far more important than you might think.**

The colon goes after "problems." A review of the colon rules follows.

Review of the Colon Rules

1. **The colon is the proper mark to use before a series or list of items when the preceding statement is a main clause ending in or containing an expression that clearly points to what is to follow. The colon should not be used in this circumstance if it will fall between a preposition and its object or between a form of the verb "to be" and its complement.**

   He brought many varieties of food, such as the following: cereals, fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

   Never use the colon in this form:

   He brought many varieties of food such as: cereals, fruits, nuts, and vegetables. ↑

   Nor in this form:

   The varieties of food he brought were: cereals, nuts, fruits, and vegetables. ↑

2. **The colon is used between independent clauses when the following clause is either an illustration, a restatement in different terms, or any other type of amplification of the preceding clause.**

   You do not understand the urgency of the situation: the time is now, and the place is here.

3. **Do not confuse the use of the colon with that of the semicolon.**

   Use the colon in its proper role: that of a mark of anticipation.

Self-Test Item on Colon Usage

In this item, you have an opportunity to use the comma, the colon, and the semicolon. The confirmation of your response is furnished below.

You will find the following rules helpful brush your teeth after each meal preferably with a tooth brush see your friendly Air Force dentist twice a year and never volunteer for extra duty. You will be a better man for it you will have healthy teeth and a minimum of extra duty.

Here is the confirmation of the self-test item above:

You will find the following rules helpful: brush your teeth after each meal, preferably with a tooth brush; see your friendly Air Force dentist twice a year; and never volunteer for extra duty. You will be a better man for it you will have healthy teeth and a minimum of extra duty.

Go on to a study of period usage.

The Use of Periods

THE KEY EXERCISE that follows is the only one that you will have in the use of periods. There are so many instances in which periods are used (or are not used) that it would be impossible for us to cover them all. We will restrict our coverage of periods to certain peculiarities of Air Force writing.

In this key exercise, all of the periods have been omitted. Furnish periods where they are required.

MSgt Ray Smith's report stated that certain heavy aircraft, ie, the B-52, C-130, C-141, etc, should not be flown in or near severe turbulence Capt Robert Grey read and approved Sergeant Smith's report.

This key exercise involves three typical uses (or perhaps we should say two typical uses and one not-so-typical non-use) of the period.

The first use concerns the rule that requires a period at the end of a declarative statement. To this end, we are sure that you placed a period after "turbulence" and after the final sentence.

The second use of periods is the requirement for periods after certain abbreviations. This rule requires a period after the "i" and the "e" of i.e. This same rule requires a period after "etc." Both of these terms are abbreviations for Latin words that have been incorporated into our language.

We now come to the third use (or non-use if you prefer to look at it that way) of periods in this key exercise. Normally, in general written English, the period is used after abbreviations such as the "SMSgt" and "Capt" in the key exercise. In Air Force writing, however, these periods are omitted. The numerous Air Force writing guides specify that periods are not used after abbreviations of rank and grade. The same is true of certain other abbreviations that are followed by periods in general written English.

The following are your exercises in the use of periods.

1. **Prof Wooten and Mr G W Hooker accompanied Maj Bill Whiteside and Col John Farbush to the lecture**

The periods are required after "Prof," "Mr," "G," "W," and "lecture." There are no periods after "Maj" and "Col."

2. **He was ordered to report to an office in Wash ,D C ,on or about 5 Jun 68**

The periods are required after "Wash," "D," "C," and "68." There is no period required after "Jun."

3. All of the drivers, while on official N A T O business, were told to drive at speeds not in excess of 35 m p h.

Acronyms (abbreviations that are pronounced as words, such as NATO) do not require periods. Neither do abbreviations such as "mph" when the abbreviation is used with figures. No additional periods are required in that practice exercise.

Even from this brief exposure to period rules, you can see the problem. There are so many rules and variations to rules covering period usage, that it would be impossible for us to cover them all in this text. There are invaluable writing guides, such as the *Government Printing Office Style Manual*, that are available to assist you. Use them.

The self-test item on the use of periods is combined with the self-test item on the use of capital letters. Go on now to the use of capital letters which follows.

The Use of Capitals

EACH OF US knows that the first word in every sentence is capitalized. The same thing is true of all proper names. Unfortunately, most of the other rules of capitalization are not that simple.

As was the case with our coverage of period usage, we are confining our coverage of capitalization to those rules that are of particular interest to Air Force writers.

The key exercise that follows consists of two sentences. In one of these sentences, "air force" should be capitalized. It is your task to determine in which sentence capital letters are required. Furnish the necessary capitals by writing directly over the lowercase letters already there.

I decided long before I was of military age to join the air force when I was old enough.

A strong air force is a necessary instrument of an effective foreign policy.

"Air Force" should be capitalized in the first sentence.

The rule that covers this use of capital letters is this: when referring to an organization such as an air force, a university, a church, etc., use all lowercase letters when the reference is abstract, for example: an *air force*, a *university*, a church. If the reference is to a **specific** organization, use capitals and lowercase, for example: the Air Force (United States), the Air Force (of the USSR), the University (of Tennessee), etc.

Here are your practice exercises in this use of capital letters.

1. **The army has a major role to play in our war in Vietnam, but it is the air force that takes the war to the enemy.**

Here, we are talking about **the** Army and **the** Air Force. They should be capitalized.

2. **The service academies of the army and navy play an annual football game in philadelphia.**

"Army" and "Navy" should be capitalized. Did you capitalize "Philadelphia"? Just checking to see if you were paying attention.

3. **He got his undergraduate degree at hoboken state college.**

"Hoboken State College" is a proper name, and it requires capitals. If we had said "He got his undergraduate degree at a state college," it would not have required capitals.

4. He went to college in a little town near his home in elmira.

"Elmira" is the only word requiring capitals.

5. The air force of any nation, large or small, places a burden on the economy of that nation.

"Air Force," even though it is used with a "the," is an abstraction here. Capitals are not required.

This is your second key exercise in the use of capitals. In this exercise, we again present two examples. One of these sentences requires capital letters; the other one does not. Read the sentences, determine which of them requires capitals, and furnish the necessary capitals by writing directly on the lowercase letters already there.

To live a long life, one must do the following:

(a) go to bed nightly at a reasonable hour,
(b) eat regular meals of wholesome food,
(c) get plenty of fresh air and exercise,
(d) avoid unhealthy habits,
(e) keep one's mind and body clean, and
(f) hope that some idiot driver doesn't wipe one out.

To live a long life, one must do the following: (a) go to bed nightly at a reasonable hour, (b) eat regular meals of wholesome food, (c) get plenty of fresh air and exercise, (d) avoid unhealthy habits, (e) keep one's mind and body clean, and (f) hope that some idiot driver doesn't wipe one out.

The capitalization rule that we are concerned with here states that capitals are used when enumeration of items is presented in **a columnar form.** When the same enumeration is presented as an integral part of the sentence (not in columnar form), capitals are not used. In the first sentence of the key exercise, the first letter of (a) through (f) should have been capitalized. Like this:

(a) Go to bed nightly at a reasonable hour,
(b) Eat regular meals of wholesome food,
(c) Etc.

The following are your practice exercises:

1. In preceding portions of this text, we studied the following named items:

(a) commas,

(b) semicolons,

(c) colons, and

(d) periods.

The words "commas," "semicolons," "colons," and "periods" should be capitalized. It does not matter that they are one-word items. The rule still applies.

2. The following people were present:
captain kangaroo, whom every child has heard of;
j. c. tuttlemeier, whom no one has heard of;
barney google, whom you have to be pretty old to have heard of;
joe (broadway joe) namath, whom everyone has heard of; and
chairman mao, whom we wish we'd never heard of.

The first word or initial of every item in the columnar series is capitalized. In addition, the first letter in each word of the **entire name** is capitalized. It doesn't matter whether they are titles (like Chairman Mao), nicknames (like Broadway Joe), or initials (like J. C. Tuttlemeier). They are all capitalized because they are parts of proper names.

3. Those in attendance were as follows: a captain, a major, four colonels, nine lieutenant colonels, six generals, and a second lieutenant to keep score.

There are no additional capitals required in this sentence. If, however, any of the titles were followed by proper names, the titles would become a part of the proper names, and capitals would be required.

4. There are two reasons that you should come:

(a) this is the last club meeting of the year, and

(b) your dues need paying.

"This" and "your" require capitals. It is not at all unusual to see a sentence arranged this way in columnar form. This is one way of building emphasis into your writing.

The following is your last key exercise in the use of capitals. In it, we have combined two related rules of capitalization. Furnish all of the required capitals.

Although he was from the south, his new assignment required that he board a train going north in the dead of winter.

The two rules demonstrated by this key exercise are these:

1. Capitalize the points of the compass when they refer to specific sections of the country (the North, the South, the Midwest, etc.). Do not capitalize these compass points when they indicate direction (going north, heading south, etc.).
2. Do not capitalize seasons of the year.

In the preceding key exercise, "South" is the only word that needed capitals.

In the practice exercises that follow, you will be combining all of the uses of capitals that we have covered. Place capitals where they are required.

1. He considered the following alternatives:
to remain on active duty with the air force,
to retire and move south to florida, or
to build a retirement home in the midwest.

The words that should have been capitalized are, in order, "to," "air force," "to," "florida," "to," and "midwest." Incidentally, the people from the various sections of the country (Midwesterners, Southerners, etc.) are also capitalized.

2. She attended university of the south, and, while there, she was associated with phi delta nu sorority, the girl scouts of america, the seventh avenue baptist church, the army reserve, and the d a r.

The words and letters that should be capitalized are "university," "south," "phi," "delta," "nu," "sorority," "girl," "scouts," "america," "seventh," "avenue," "baptist," "church," "army," "reserve," and "DAR."

With that exercise, we complete our study of the rules of capitalization. A review of both the capitalization and period rules follows on the next page.

Review of the Capital and Period Rules

Study this review carefully before going on to the self-test item that follows.

1. **Periods are used at the close of declarative statements.**

   Look! Look! See Spot chase Puff.
   ↑

2. **Periods are used after certain abbreviations.**

   Look! Look! See Spot chase Puff, cattle, sheep, horses, his master, etc. around the house.
   ↑

3. **The period is not used in military writing after abbreviations of rank and grade and after certain other abbreviations.**

   Spot caught Lt Robert Smith, his master, on 7 Sep 67.
   ↑ ↑

4. **Capitals are used to begin the names of organizations when the reference is specific.**

   Lieutenant Smith, Spot's former master, was a member of the Air Force.
   ↑ ↑

5. **Capitals are not used to begin the names of organizations when the reference is abstract.**

   Lieutenant Smith had purchased Spot from a traveling circus.
   ↑

6. **Capitalize the points of the compass when they refer to specific locations. Do not capitalize them when they refer to directions.**

   Lieutenant Smith had purchased Spot in the North, and he drove south
   ↑ ↑

   to raise him.

7. **Capitals are used to begin the first word of each item in columnar form.**

   Spot loved Lieutenant Smith. He considered Lieutenant Smith all of following:

   a. Kind,
      ↑
   b. Considerate, and
      ↑
   c. Tasty.
      ↑

Self-Test Item for Capitals and Periods

Furnish capital letters and periods in all places where they are required. When you have done so, you may check your responses below.

it sam icarus of the air university was in deep trouble; his writing assignment was due and sam still needed information on the performance of the following aircraft:

(a) the spad,

(b) the fokker, and

(c) the sopwith camel

sam considered going to some university library for the needed information, but there was not enough time he asked himself for the thousandth time why he had selected snoopy and the red baron as subjects for his assignment another goof like this and he would be mr sam icarus, an unemployed easterner

The confirmation for the above item follows.

It Sam Icarus of the Air University was in deep trouble; his writing assignment was due,and Sam still needed information on the performance of the following aircraft:

(a) The Spad,

(b) The Fokker, and

(c) The Sopwith Camel.

Sam considered going to some university library for the needed information, but there was not enough time. He asked himself for the thousandth time why he had selected Snoopy and the Red Baron as subjects for his assignment. Another goof like this and he would be Mr. Sam Icarus, an unemployed Easterner.

Go on to the uses of abbreviations which follows.

The Use of Abbreviations

TO BE PERFECTLY hnst, we have not been looking fwd to teaching the procd for using abbrs in AF writing. The use of abbrs is a most unsatfy way of comm because both the writer and the reader must agree on the meaning of the abbrs. To this end, the abbrs must possess a degree of stdn. If it were otherwise, the use of abbrs would work a hdsp on both parties. The info in this portion of the text, therefore, should assist you in using and comm with abbrs.

With one exception, all of the abbreviations above are authorized by Air Force Manual (AFM) 11–2, the authorized guide to abbreviations for Air Force writers. Please note that NONE of the abbreviations have periods following them unless, of course, the abbreviation occurs at the end of a declarative statement.

In this part of the text, we are changing the response pattern that we have established. Instead of responding to a key exercise, you will be selecting the correct response from a list of alternatives that we offer. An example of this type of response follows.

From the following alternatives, select the abbreviation from the first paragraph above that is not an authorized abbreviation.

- ☐ 1. hnst
- ☐ 2. unsatfy
- ☐ 3. stdn
- ☐ 4. fwd
- ☐ 5. hdsp
- ☐ 6. procd
- ☐ 7. comm
- ☐ 8. abbrs

Which response did you select? The correct response is number one. "Hnst" is not an authorized abbreviation. Hnstly!

The following exercise demonstrates a very common misuse of abbreviations among Air University students. In this exercise, there are three short statements that are similar in content. Only one of them, however, demonstrates a correct use of abbreviations. The other two are typical of abbreviations that are misused. You are to check the response that represents the correct use of abbreviations. You are to assume that these three statements are complete in themselves; that is, nothing precedes them, and nothing follows them.

- ☐ 1. I am happy to be a student in AU. Since becoming a commissioned officer, it has been my ambition to attend an AU resident school. I do not know what my future assignments will be, but I am sure they will be affected by my attendance here.
- ☐ 2. I am happy to be a student in Air University (AU). Since becoming a commissioned officer, it has been my ambition to come here. I do not know what my future assignments will be, but I am sure they will be affected by my attendance here.
- ☐ 3. I am happy to be a student in Air University (AU). Since becoming a commissioned officer, it has been my ambition to come to AU. I do not know what my future assignments will be, but I am sure they will be affected by my attendance here.

The first response is incorrect. **Do not use an abbreviation without explaining to the uninitiated what it means.**

The second response is incorrect. **Do not introduce an abbreviation if it is not your intention to use it again.**

The third response is correct. Introduce the abbreviation as it is done in this third response, and then you can use it at any subsequent position in the narrative without further explanation.

As your last exercise in the use of abbreviations, we want to see if you can detect a pattern of development in selected abbreviations. Here are the authorized abbreviations that you are to examine for a pattern of development.

hospital – hosp	Lieutenant General – Lt Gen
boundary – bndry	harbor – har
bombardment – bomb	fallout warning – fallwarn
deceased – decd	infra red – IR
Sergeant – Sgt	increase – incr
President – Pres	increment – incr
overseas – os	ground to air – G/A

After you have examined the preceding list of authorized abbreviations for a pattern of development, select a statement from the alternatives that follow which is the most realistic evaluation of the abbreviations.

☐ 1. Authorized abbreviations are formed by leaving all of the vowels out of the word to be abbreviated.

☐ 2. Authorized abbreviations are formed by retaining the initial syllable in a word and dropping all subsequent syllables.

☐ 3. There is no clearly recognizeable pattern of development for authorized abbreviations.

☐ 4. Authorized abbreviations are formed of single words by using the first letter of those words, or, in the case of multiple words, they are formed by using the first letter of all words.

The correct response is number three.

A quick glance at the abbreviations in AFM 11–2 and those provided above will tell you that there are no hard and fast rules of development. So, what do you do when you want to use abbreviations? Well, for one thing, you do not arbitrarily generate your own abbreviations. For another thing, you go to an authorized source such as AFM 11–2. If there is no copy of AFM 11–2 available, **don't abbreviate.**

With the last bit of advice, we conclude this discussion of abbreviations. Go on to the uses of cardinal and ordinal numbers in Air Force writing.

The Use of Cardinal and Ordinal Numbers

MILITARY WRITING is filled with numbers, dates, and amounts. It is important that you know how to express these figures in narrative form, and this part of the text is designed to teach you the more significant rules for accomplishing that.

In planning your first exercise in the use of cardinal and ordinal numbers as expressed in narrative form, we decided to give you a riddle to solve. The exercise that resulted is both the riddle and a demonstration of the ways in which numbers are expressed in a narrative. In this exercise, *there is no writing for you to do.* We only want you to see if you can solve the riddle. As you read, pay particular attention to the ways in which the numbers are expressed.

A man entered a hardware store to make a purchase. He first located the item that he desired. In doing so, he noticed that the store was well stocked with hundreds of similar items. He called the clerk over, and asked him the price of the item. The clerk replied that the item retailed for 50 cents apiece, but, if the man wanted more than one, he could buy two for 75 cents. "Excellent," the customer replied. "That means that I could buy the ten I am holding for 75 cents." The clerk said that this was so. "Good," the customer said. "Then give me 810." The clerk did so, and informed the customer that the total bill was $1.25.

WHAT WAS THE ITEM THAT WAS PURCHASED?

We hope that you did not get so interested in solving the riddle that you neglected to notice the various ways in which the number amounts were expressed. Generally, you spell out numbers less than 10 except when expressing units of time, money, and measurements; and you use figures for numbers of 10 or more unless the number is the first word of a sentence.

1. Ordinal numbers indicate **order.** "First," "second," and "third" are ordinal numbers. Except for isolated instances in which they are expressed as "1st," "2nd," and "3rd," these numbers are **spelled out.** In the exercise, we stated that the customer *"first* located the item."

2. Cardinal numbers are numbers used in expressing **amounts.** Generally, cardinal numbers expressing amounts LESS THAN 11 are spelled out. In the exercise, we stated that "if the man wanted more than *one,* he could buy *two* for 75 cents." The grammatical unit that controls the way in which cardinal numbers are expressed is THE SENTENCE. When deciding if the cardinal number is to be spelled out or expressed as a figure, ask yourself these two questions:

   1. **Is the number less than 11?**

   2. **Are there any other numbers 11 or greater than 11 in the sentence?**

   If all of the numbers in the **sentence** are ten or less, they are written out. If, however, there are numbers greater than ten in that sentence, then *all* of the numbers *in that sentence* are expressed as figures. As demonstrated by the exercise, this does not apply to dollar amounts like the "75 cents" in the riddle.

3. Monetary amounts like the "75 cents" can be expressed in several accepted ways. Amounts of less than $1.00 can be expressed as "75 cents," "75¢," or "$0.75." Amounts of $1.00 or more can be expressed at "five hundred dollars" or as "$500.00." In expressing monetary amounts, be consistent.

By the way, we have not forgotten to give you the answer to the riddle. If you have not already figured it out, here it is.

The man bought numerals for his house number. Each numeral costs 50 cents. Two such numerals could be bought for 75 cents; consequently, the "ten" the customery was holding (a one and a zero) could be purchased for 75 cents. The customer finally bought 810 (an eight, a one, and a zero) for $1.25.

The two exercises that follow are practice exercises in the application of the rule most often violated by Air University writers. In each of these exercises, we leave one or more blank spaces in which a number is to be inserted. The blank spaces are followed by certain numbers expressed as figures. Your task is to decide, based upon the rules that we have given you, if the numbers are to remain figures or be written out. When you have decided, furnish the correct form of the number in the blank provided.

You may want to review the rules above before continuing.

1. He had hoped to be _____ (1st) in line, but positions _____ (1) through _____ (8) were reserved for season ticket holders. Positions _____ (9) through _____ (15) were taken by early arrivals. He contented himself by occupying position number _____ (16).

The entries, in order, should be as follows: "first," "one," "eight," "9," "15," and "16."

Here is another one. This one demonstrates an exception to the rule that we just practiced. Be careful, it's tricky.

2. _____ (12) times in the last _____ (30) days, he had been called upon to assist his _____ (6) team members.

Well, we said it was tricky. Normally, the 12 in the above sentence would have been expressed as a figure, but not in this type of sentence. The exception to the rule states that any number, regardless of its size, will be written out **if it opens a sentence.** All other numbers in the sentence above should be expressed as figures.

There are many other rules concerning the uses of numbers in written material. We have examined only those rules that are most frequently violated by Air University writers. For additional instructions in the uses of numbers and the ways in which these numbers are expressed in writing, we refer you to the many writing guides available to the Air Force writer. We specifically recommend the *Government Printing Office Style Manual* and *Air Force Manual 10–4.*

This concludes Part One of this text. If you have reached this point without a break, this is an excellent time to lay the text aside for a well earned rest.

part 2 | THE BASIC SENTENCE AND PARAGRAPH

Introduction to Part Two

IT IS TIME TO TURN our attention to the basic unit of written communication, the sentence. In this part of the text, we study these things about the sentence:

First, we examine selected parts of speech and their contribution to the communication process. These parts of speech were selected as being particularly troublesome to Air University writers:

Verbs, both active and passive;

Verbals;

Pronouns and their antecedents; and

Modifiers.

Within this section of the text on parts of speech, we take a look at the concept of **smothered verbs.** We examine what they are and what they are not.

Second, we analyze sentence form and content. We see how the form and content of sentences contribute to effective communication.

Third, we study transitions within and between sentences. It is in this section of the text that you have your first significant opportunity to write sentences within the guidelines imposed by the text.

Finally, we consider the sentence as a part of the larger unit of expression, the paragraph. In this portion of the text, you are asked to design, construct, and evaluate your own paragraphs.

The Parts of Speech—The Verb

LET'S BEGIN OUR STUDY of sentence parts with a brief review of **verbs.** As you know, the verb is the heart of the sentence: it is the engine that makes the sentence go. It naturally follows, then, that an effective sentence requires an effective verb that is effectively used.

Before we talk about effective and ineffective verb usage, let's briefly review some important things about verbs.

Verbs can be classified in three ways:

1. **Transitive verbs** are verbs that have direct objects on which they act, as in "John *hit* Fred."
2. **Intransitive verbs** are verbs that require no direct objects, as in "Fred *bled.*"
3. **Linking verbs** are verbs that connect the subject of a sentence with a word that describes the subject or that can be equated with the subject, as in "Fred *was* inconsiderate."

With those definitions out of the way, here are some sentences in which we want you to classify the verb as **transitive, intransitive,** or **linking.** Enter the class of the verb in the space provided beside each sentence.

1. _____ The colonel summoned the lieutenant.
2. _____ The lieutenant saluted.
3. _____ Happiness is a warm salute.

The first sentence contains the **transitive** verb, the second contains the **intransitive** verb, and the last contains the **linking** verb.

In addition to being transitive, intransitive, or linking, a verb has **person.** It has a definite form for the first, second, and third persons. Here is an example using the verb "to be":

I *am* a sergeant.
You *are* a major.
He *is* a lieutenant.

A verb also has **tense.** It has a form for the present, past, and future tenses.

I *am* a captain.
I *was* a lieutenant.
I *will be* a major.

A verb also has **number.** This means that it must agree in number with its subject.

Captains *are* of company grade rank.
A major *is* of field grade rank.

A verb also has **voice.** It "speaks" in the active or passive voice.

The sergeant *called* the lieutenant.
The lieutenant *was called* by the sergeant.

Now that we have reviewed **class, person, tense, number** and **voice** of verbs, we will take a closer look at **number** and **voice** because these two things are real problem areas for Air University writers.

First, we will cover agreement in **number** between verbs and their subjects. One of the most troublesome areas in verb agreement involves the use of compound subjects.

Compound subjects are usually treated as plurals; therefore, their verbs are usually plural in number as this example shows:

Tom and Stan *have* new cars.

However, when the compound subject forms a unit that is treated as one, the verb is singular. Which of the following has the verb with the correct **number?** Check the response of your choice.

☐ 1. In most foreign countries, the husband and father *have* the last word in family decisions.

☐ 2. In most foreign countries, the husband and father *has* the last word in family decisions.

The "husband and father" in the exercise above is the same person, and this compound subject is treated as one. The correct response is sentence number two.

With compound subjects, as the preceding exercise shows, the **meaning** of the compound subject has a great deal to do with the number of the verb. The same is true of **collective** subjects. Normally, collective subjects are treated as singular subjects, and they have singular verbs, as in this example:

The team *goes* to out of town games by air.

There are times, however, when the collective subjects refer to individual members. In these instances, a plural verb is required.

The team *were* arguing among themselves.

In this type of agreement, there is almost always another word in the sentence to give you a clue. "Themselves" in the sentence above is such a word. If it had been "itself," you would have used the singular verb "was."

Place a check mark beside any of the sentences below in which the verb does **not** agree with its collective subject in number.

☐ 1. The committee *determines* next year's budget.

☐ 2. The public *has* their own ways of finding the truth.

☐ 3. The army *travels* on its stomach.

☐ 4. The jury *is* still out.

The second sentence is the only one in which there is subject and verb disagreement. The clue word for the correct verb number in that sentence is "their."

This brief discussion of compound and collective subjects was designed to point out that we often choose our verb form on the basis of **meaning** rather than on **form.** This method of choosing verb form can be disastrous to effective writing at times. This is particularly true when a noun comes between a subject and its verb, and that noun has a number that is different from that of the subject. Here is an example:

Once in a while an *airplane* such as the F–105, the F–104, and *others* is designed for one role and used in some other role.

In this type of subject and verb agreement, it is critical that you correctly identify the real subject and not be led astray by some intervening noun. In the preceding example, the hazard is to have the verb "is" agree in number with the "others" that immediately precedes it rather than with its real subject, "airplane."

In the exercises that follow, you are to **underline** the real subject in each sentence and select the correct verb form from the two alternatives that we offer. Draw a circle around the verb that agrees in number with the subject that you identified.

1. Today's child, unlike his parents when they were children, (expect) (expects) to be entertained.
2. A type of column that you find in many newspapers (is) (are) advice to the lovelorn.
3. Certain breeds of horses such as the American Quarterhorse (is) (are) ideal for cutting cattle.
4. Everything including farm buildings, equipment, and cows (was) (were) wiped out by the storm.

The subjects and appropriate verbs should have been identified as follows:

1. child. . . (expects)
2. type. . . (is)
3. breeds. . . (are)
4. Everything. . . (was)

With that exercise in subject and verb agreement in **number,** we leave verb number and go into verb **voice** in more detail.

There is probably no other feature of verb usage more abused, misused, and misunderstood than verb voice. This is true among Air University writers and, indeed, among all military writers. Pick up almost any piece of official correspondence from an Air Force letter to a local publication such as the Daily Bulletin, and you will see the truth of the preceding statement.

To understand this abuse of verb voice, let's talk about it briefly.

A verb "speaks" to the reader in either the **active** voice or the **passive** voice. Here is the test for active and passive voices:

1. In **active** voice construction, the subject of the sentence performs an action. as in "JOHN (the subject) **hit** the ball. The subject of the sentence, "John." performed the action of hitting the ball. The verb "hit," therefore, is an **active** verb.

   In **passive** voice construction, the subject of the sentence is acted upon, as in THE BALL (the subject) **was hit** by John. The subject of the sentence, "The ball," has an action performed on it. The verb "was hit," therefore, is a **passive** verb.

2. To recognize the passive voice, remember this: the passive voice always uses some form of the verb "to be" (is, am, are, was, were, etc.) with the past participle form of the action verb, as in "It is desired," "It is requested," "The aircraft was flown," "the quarters' allowance is terminated," etc. Be careful, though, in identifying the passive voice that you do not confuse the past participle form of the action verb with the same verb form used as an adjective. Here is an example of what we mean:

   The student *was pleased* by the test score.

   That sentence is passive voice construction. It is the passive way of saying "The test score pleased the student."

   The student *was pleased* but sad.

   That sentence **is not** passive voice construction. The past participle "pleased" is an adjective that modifies "the student." "Was" is simply a linking verb that connects the subject with a word that describes the subject. In the exercise that follows, you will have a chance to show us that you can recognize the difference between these two forms.

In Squadron Officer School at Air University, there is a game the students play known as "flickerball." In the following sentences about flickerball, tell us which sentences are in the **active** voice and which are in the **passive** voice. Write *active* or *passive* in the blanks provided.

_____ 1. Flickerball will be played by Squadron Officer School students.

_____ 2. Squadron Officer School students will play flickerball conscientiously.

_____ 3. Conscientiously played flickerball provides a healthful outlet for youthful energies.

_____ 4. Gouges, bruises, and abrasions are also provided by conscientiously played flickerball.

_____ 5. The Squadron Officer School Commandant likes flickerball.

_____ 6. Consequently, we like flickerball.

_____ 7. Flickerball is not liked by medical corpsmen.

Sentences one, four, and seven are in the passive voice. The remainder are in the active voice. How did you do on sentence number three? Did you identify it correctly as active voice construction? If you did not, you were probably led astray by "conscientiously *played* flickerball." "Played" is a past participle form of "play" that serves as an adjective here, and it modifies "flickerball." The real clue that the sentence was active voice construction is in "flickerball *provides*." To be passive voice, it would be written like this:

A healthful outlet for youthful energies *is provided* by conscientiously played flickerball.

Now that you can identify active and passive voices, let's see how verb voice is misused in military writing.

Read this short narrative, and select a response that best describes it.

A meeting was held in the base commander's office on 5 May, and a special report on base accidents was rendered as a result of that meeting. This special report is contained in the Ground Safety Bulletin of 12 May, and it is desired that all base personnel read subject report.

☐ 1. The preceding narrative is direct and to the point. The use of the passive voice does not detract from the direct tone of the narrative.

☐ 2. The misuse of the passive voice in the preceding narrative makes it impossible to determine who met, who rendered the report, and who desires that base personnel read the report.

☐ 3. The preceding narrative is a judicious mixture of both the active and the passive voices. It is direct, but it is direct without being too abrupt.

The correct response is number two. The narrative concerning the meeting in the commander's office is a good example of indirectness in military writing caused by a misuse of the passive voice.

Here are three versions of the same narrative. Read each version carefully, and decide which version you prefer. Place a check mark beside your choice.

☐ 1. Military writing abuses the passive voice through overuse. When the military writer wants to be deliberately vague, he selects the passive voice. When the writer desires to be pretentious, he reaches for the passive voice. It is easy to avoid vagueness and pretentiousness by not using the passive voice, but too much active voice causes the style to be too direct. The effective writer strives for a judicious mixture of both active and passive voices.

☐ 2. The passive voice is abused in military writing through overuse. When deliberate vagueness is wanted, it is the passive voice that is selected by the military writer. When pretentiousness is desired, the passive voice is invariably reached for by the writer. Vagueness and pretentiousness are avoided if the passive voice is not used, but a too direct style is caused by too much active voice. A judicious mixture of both active and passive voices is striven for by the effective writer.

☐ 3. Military writing abuses the passive voice through overuse. When deliberate vagueness is wanted, it is the passive voice that is selected by the military writer. When the writer wants to be pretentious, he invariably reaches for the passive voice. It is easy to avoid vagueness and pretentiousness by not using the passive voice, but too much active voice causes the style to be too direct. The effective writer strives for a judicious mixture of both active and passive voices.

If you read each of the narratives carefully, you noted that narrative number one is entirely in the active voice, number two is entirely in the passive voice, and number three is a mixture of active and passive voice. The clue for the response that we wanted is inherent in the message of all three narratives. The effective writer uses a judicious mixture of active and passive voices, and, on the basis of this, we hope that you chose the last narrative as being the one that you prefer. While you might have preferred the first narrative, you should not have selected the second narrative under any circumstances.

Once again, we want to stress that it is not the passive voice that is bad; it is its misuse that is bad.

We recently came across a short narrative that is filled with the passive voice, but we could not criticize the writer for his use of the passive voice. Here is the narrative. After you have read it, select one of the responses that follow that best describes what the writer was trying to accomplish with his use of the passive voice.

> The security classification signs are filed in the textbook warehouse. The administrative section signs are also stored in the warehouse. No other signs were required for the conference. No art work was required. Vertical standards were constructed to hold the security classification signs on the platform, and these new standards are also stored in the warehouse. These same standards were used outside the conference building to point the way to the auditorium. The nameplates for the podium were obtained from the base Civil Engineering shop.

- ☐ 1. The writer of the preceding narrative was attempting to be pretentious with his consistent use of the passive voice.
- ☐ 2. The writer of the preceding narrative was more concerned with reporting what was done than he was with reporting who had done it, and the passive voice does this well.
- ☐ 3. The writer of the preceding narrative wasn't paying attention as he wrote, and habit caused too much of the passive voice to sneak in.

The correct response is number two. If your writing problem requires that you write about **what** was done, rather than **who** did what, then use the passive voice.

Don't let anyone tell you that the active voice is all good and the passive voice is all bad. It isn't that simple. How did it all get started, this misuse of the passive voice in military writing? No one knows for sure, but we can provide some pretty accurate guesses. In the alternatives below, check all of those that you consider to be probable reasons that the passive voice is misused in military writing.

- ☐ 1. To be purposefully vague and indirect.
- ☐ 2. To be pretentious.
- ☐ 3. Habit or custom.
- ☐ 4. Lack of writing ability.
- ☐ 5. Through oversight.
- ☐ 6. Letterhead stationery.

Which did you select? Well, we suspect that all of the above are probable reasons. Did you select number six, "letterhead stationery," as being a probable reason, or did you eliminate that as appearing to be inconsistent with the other five reasons? Letterhead stationery has had a greater influence on the use of the passive voice in military writing than you might think. A look at the examples here and on the page that follows might convince you.

Here is a sample military letter **not on letterhead stationery:**

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Lt White/7615 1 Jul 68

SUBJECT: Immunization

TO: All Air University students

1. It is desired that all Air University students report to the immunization clinic in Bldg 50 to begin a series of 12 inoculations for the creeping crud which is . . . .

Twelve inoculations? After the initial shock had worn off, your next reaction would probably be which of the following?

- ☐ 1. **Who** desires that I report to Bldg 50?
- ☐ 2. The creeping crud? What's that?
- ☐ 3. Wow, how'll I ever explain this?
- ☐ 4. How do you know if you've got it?
- ☐ 5. By the way, where is Bldg 50?
- ☐ 6. How does one get out of this chicken outfit?

Your reaction may have been any one or all of the above, but you would probably be wondering by whose authority Lieutenant White was ordering you to submit to this ordeal.

Now take a look at the letter below.

Here is the same letter as it might appear **on letterhead stationery:**

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
Headquarters Air University (AU)
Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama 36112

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Lt White/7615 1 Jul 68

SUBJECT: Immunization

TO: All Air University students

1. It is desired that all Air University students report to the immunization clinic in Bldg 50 to begin a series of 12 inoculations for the creeping crud which is . . . .

After reading that letter, you might ask "Why me?" but you would not have to ask **who** desires that you report to the immunization clinic. Although the statement "It is desired" is in the passive voice, and it does not specify who is doing the desiring, you can make an accurate guess. Who, among the following, is desiring that you present your reluctant body to the immunization clinic?

☐ 1. One each Lt White.

☐ 2. The hospital commander.

☐ 3. "Head Shed."

No, you don't have to ask "Who desires?" The letterhead provides all the authority you require to know that "Head Shed" is calling. This dependency on the letterhead to provide the authority for official directions and actions has done much to encourage the misuse of the passive voice in military writing.

As a final exercise in the use of the active and passive voices in military writing, we have selected some passive phrases from official correspondence that need to be recast into the active voice. Following each phrase, there is a blank in which you are to rewrite the phrase from its passive form to an active form. When you are finished, you may check your responses against ours.

1. It is desired that all personnel . . . .

_____

2. It is requested that action be taken to . . . .

_____

3. This request is forwarded in order that your office . . . .

_____

4. Studies are being conducted by this office . . . .

_____

5. It is hoped that assigned personnel will . . . .

_____

6. Your pay records were misdirected to this organization . . . .

_____

Check your responses against ours on the following page.

1. It is desired that all personnel. . . .
   The question is, **who** desires? The statement would be much more effective if it were written as "I desire," "We desire," or even more effective, "We **want.**"

2. It is requested that action be taken. . . .

   This one is really bad, but, as bad as it is, it is common. A more effective version would be "I want (or someone wants) you to do thus and so."

3. This request is forwarded in order that your office. . . .
   Why not say "We are sending this request so that. . ."?

4. Studies are being conducted by this office. . . .
   "We're studying it. . ."

5. It is hoped that all personnel will. . . .
   "We ask all personnel to. . ."

6. Your pay records were misdirected to this organization. . . .
   "Someone sent your pay records to us by mistake. . ."

It doesn't matter if your responses differed from ours. What does matter is that you recast all of the statements into the active voice. It is only in doing this that you can see for yourself the critical difference that the active voice can make in your writing.

This completes our examination of active and passive verb voices. In it, you have seen that a judicious use of verb voice can go a long way in making your writing more effective.

While we are still on the subject of verb usage, let's take a look at a near relative of the verb, the verbal, and see how it, too, can affect your writing.

Verbals

You use verbals in your writing and speaking every day, but can you recognize one when asked to do so? And even more important, can you explain the role of verbals in effective writing?

Here is a verbal, one of several types, used in a sentence. Examine the form of the verbal and the position it occupies in the sentence, and be able to tell us a couple of things about it in the exercise that follows.

He used compressed air to inflate the tire.

In the exercise that follows, all of the statements are true, but we want you to select **two** alternatives that best describe the verbal underlined above. The two alternatives that you select must be true of the verbal in the sentence above and **true of all other verbals as well.**

- ☐ 1. A verbal is an adjective form of a verb that modifies a noun.
- ☐ 2. A verbal is a word that is derived from a verb, but which no longer functions as a verb.
- ☐ 3. A verbal is a form of the verb that ends in "-ed."
- ☐ 4. A verbal is a form of writing shorthand in which an involved concept can be stated very briefly.

The correct responses are numbers two and four. Choices one and three are true of the verbal in the basic sentence, but choices two and four describe the verbal in the basic sentence **and all other verbals.**

A verbal, any verbal, is both of these things:

1. A word that is derived from a verb that no longer functions as a verb.
2. A form of writing shorthand in which a complex concept can be stated in a minimum of words.

Here is the basic sentence again:

He used *compressed* air to inflate the tire.

In that sentence, "compressed" sums up an involved concept in just one word. The concept is the act of putting air under pressure and confining it. "Compressed" is derived from the verb "compress," but it no longer functions as a verb. In the basic sentence, it is used as an adjective to modify the noun, "air." As it is used in the basic sentence, the verbal allows us to exercise greater control over the emphasis in the sentence. It is this feature of the use of verbs that concerns us most: the control of emphasis within the sentence. In the basic sentence, notice that the emphasis is on the inflation of the tire. Where is the emphasis in this version of the sentence without the verbal?

He used air that had been put under pressure and confined to inflate the tire.

☐ 1. The emphasis is on the compression of the air.

☐ 2. The emphasis is on the inflation of the tire.

In the last version of the sentence on the preceding page, the emphasis is on the compression of the air.

Now that you know what verbals **do**, let's look at three types of verbals. The three types that we consider are these:

1. **Infinitives,** such as "to fly;"
2. **Participles,** such as "compressed" or "compressing;" and
3. **Gerunds,** such as "flying" or "swimming."

Note that each of the examples provided above is derived from a verb, but the new verbal form can no longer function as a verb. Let's begin our examination of the role of verbals in effective writing with the infinitive.

Verbals—The Infinitive

Infinitives are verbals that are commonly formed from a basic verb and the word "to." Infinitives are used in many ways in sentence construction, but the principal ways are these:

1. As a noun (*To see* is a blessing),
2. As an adjective (I have work *to do)*, or
3. As an adverb (Tom was happy *to have been chosen).*

In the exercises that follow, we want you to identify all of the infinitives by underlining each one that you find.

1. The repair part that I want to use is too used to be any good.
2. To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield is asking a bit too much.
3. It is too difficult to find two infinitives in this sentence.
4. He came to suddenly, and he looked around in dismay.
5. To keep up with a six year old is too much for me.

Did you find them all? Few of us have trouble identifying the infinitives, but not all of us know how to use them correctly. Our grade school teachers spent too much time telling us not to (without telling us why not) split them, and too little time was spent in telling us how effective they are for stating involved concepts in a few words.

The infinitives in the exercise sentences you just completed are identified below.

1. The repair part that I want *to use* is too used *to be* any good.
2. *To strive, to seek, to find,* and not *to yield* is asking a bit too much.
3. It is too difficult *to find* two infinitives in this sentence.
4. There are no infinitives in sentence four.
5. *To keep up with* a six year old is too much for me.

We have said that infinitives and other verbals can be used as a form of verbal shorthand within our sentences in order to control the emphasis. In the following exercises, you will have a chance to do this, to use the infinitive to express an involved concept in as few words as possible in order to control emphasis. In each of the exercises, the concept is underlined. You are to substitute an acceptable infinitive in its place.

The object of war is the neutralization of the enemy as a potential threat by taking whatever action is appropriate.

The object of war is _____

I have a lot of work remaining that must be done by none other than myself.

I have a lot of work _____

A child's usual response to punishment is one of anguished wailing accompanied by profuse lachrymation.

A child's usual response to punishment is _____ .

Our choices for the preceding infinitives would have been as follows:

The object of war is to conquer (or to defeat) the enemy .

I have a lot of work to do .

A child's usual response to punishment is to cry .

Your responses do not have to be the same as ours. We only want you to be aware of the effectiveness of infinitives to state complex concepts in as few words as possible.

Verbals—The Participle

The next verbal that we will consider is the participle. The participle is not quite so easy to explain as the infinitive, so stay with us. Let's begin with a short definition.

A participle is the only verbal whose use is limited to that of being a modifier.

You previously saw that the infinitive, another verbal, can be used as a modifier (as an adverb or an adjective), but the infinitive has other uses as well. Not so in the case of the participle; its use is restricted to being just a modifier and nothing else. Like the infinitive when the infinitive acts as a modifier, the participle can be an adjective (as in *compressed* air), or it can be an adverb (as in exit *laughing*). The forms that you see here, the "-ed" and the "-ing" endings, are the usual forms of the participle when it is functioning as a verbal.

In the exercises that follow, underline all of the participle forms of the verbal that you find.

1. Paul Revere rode through town yelling that the British were on their way.
2. He walked down the congested hall careening from person to person.
3. The clogged drain was stuffed with hardened grease.
4. She ran screaming from the sight of the stuffed bear.
5. It is desired that you respond quickly.

The participles that function as verbals in the preceding exercises are as follows:

1. In the first sentence, "yelling" is the participle. It acts as an adverb, and it modifies "rode."
2. In the second sentence, "congested" is a participle that acts as an adjective and modifies "hall." "Careening" is a participle that acts as an adverb and modifies "walked."
3. "Clogged" and "hardened" are the participles in the third sentence. If you underlined "stuffed," look again. It is in the form of the participle, but it is the action verb in a passive voice construction.
4. "Screaming" and "stuffed" are the participles in sentence four.
5. There are no verbal forms of the participle in sentence five.

All of the verbals in the preceding exercise sentences are used in the same way that we saw the infinitive being used, as a form of writing shorthand to control the emphasis within the sentence.

The verbals have been omitted from the following sentences, and they have been replaced by the concept that they represent. Rewrite each sentence in the space provided by stating the concepts as precisely as possible through the use of participles.

The drain that could no longer accommodate the free passage of liquids through it due to being severely restricted in diameter was stuffed with animal and vegetable fat that had been converted to a semi-solid state through the action of low temperature or emulsification.

_____

_____

Did you recognize the sentence? That was sentence three from the previous exercise, "The clogged drain was stuffed with hardened grease."

The dog that had been the victim of a collision with a moving automobile ran with an awkward gait that involved the use of only three legs down the thoroughfare that was filled with vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

_____

_____

Here is a concise version of the same sentence made possible by the use of participles.

The *injured* dog ran *limping* down the *crowded* street.

Do you begin to see how the use of participles can assist you in controlling the emphasis within your sentences?

Verbals—The Gerund

The last verbal that we shall examine is the gerund. Let's begin with a short definition of a gerund.

A gerund is the only verbal whose use is limited to that of being a noun.

We have seen that the infinitive can function as a noun (*To see* is a blessing.), but it has other uses as well. We have also seen that the participle can function only as a modifier. With those two verbals out of the way, you should have no trouble recognizing and using gerunds.

You cannot confuse a gerund with an infinitive because their **forms** are entirely different:

Infinitive	**Gerund**
To see is a blessing.	*Seeing* is a blessing.

And you cannot confuse a gerund with a participle (even though their forms are sometimes the same) because their **functions** are entirely different:

Gerund	**Participle**
Swimming is fun.	He left *swimming* upstream.

The gerund is the noun (as in "Swimming is fun."), and the participle is the modifier (as in "He left swimming upstream.").

In the following exercises, underline all of the gerunds. Remember, the gerund acts **only** as a noun, and the participle acts **only** as a modifier.

1. Walking is an exercise that is often neglected.
2. Walking slowly, the man fell into an excavation.
3. Seeing is believing.
4. Winning is a habit.

The gerunds in the preceding sentences are as follows:

1. In the first sentence, "walking" is the gerund.
2. There are no gerunds in the second sentence. If you underlined "walking," take another look. It is a participle that modifies "man."
3. "Seeing" and "believing" are the gerunds in sentence three.
4. "Winning" is the gerund in sentence four.

Once again we say that all of the verbals in the previous exercise sum up an involved concept in a minimum of words, and once again we ask you to convert the following sentences to a form in which gerunds are used to control the emphasis within the sentence. Write your version of the sentence in the space provided.

The act of visual confirmation of an event is equivalent to a mental confirmation of the event having occurred.

_____

_____

Well, we did it to you again. That is the third sentence from the preceding exercise as it might be expressed without gerunds. With gerunds substituting for the complex grammar, it is "Seeing is believing."

The process of effectively transcribing thoughts into visual symbols in order to communicate ideas is fun.

_____

_____

That one, simply stated with a gerund, is "Effective writing is fun." Have you been noticing how stuffy these sentences sound without verbals? The last one is particularly stuffy, but it is much more than that: it is an example of a type of writing error made by many Air University writers. What is the error that was made in the last exercise sentence? Check the response of your choice.

☐ 1. The writer failed to use a gerund to sum up the complex concept about the transcription of thoughts into visual symbols.

☐ 2. The writer presented a detailed expression of a complex concept, that of effective writing, and followed it with a single-word summation of an equally involved concept, fun.

The last response is correct. While there is no rule that requires you to use verbals, there is an unwritten law of effective writing that requires you to **be consistent.** It is structurally inconsistent to place a detailed discussion of a concept in grammatical apposition to a single-word summation of another concept.

Before leaving the subject of verbals, we have a word for you to classify as an infinitive, a participle, or a gerund. The word is **"smothered."** In the spaces below, check the response that correctly identifies the word **"smothered."**

☐ 1. It is an infinitive.

☐ 2. It is a gerund.

☐ 3. It is a participle.

The correct response is number three; it is a participle. Since it is a verbal, and specifically a participle, you could expect the word to be a single-word summation of an involved concept, and you would be right. "Smothered" brings to mind other participles such as "stifled," "suffocated," "suppressed," and "buried."

With that in mind, how, then, would you describe the term, "a *smothered* verb"? Check one of the responses below.

- ☐ 1. "A smothered verb" describes a part of speech. As is the case with other parts of speech, "a smothered verb" can be identified by its form and function within the sentence.
- ☐ 2. "A smothered verb" describes a concept. The concept is expressed in the term "smothered," and it concerns the characteristics of certain words under certain conditions of use within the sentence.

The correct response is number two. The term "a smothered verb" describes the characteristics of certain words within the sentence, and the use of these words must occur **under certain conditions** if the term is to be valid. "A smothered verb" in one sentence is not necessarily "a smothered verb" in another sentence. More about this later.

Since the term "a smothered verb" describes a concept instead of a word or class of words, you could not be expected to point at a word and say "Aha! **that** is a smothered verb." You can, however, be expected to point at a sentence and say that **sentence** has, you'll pardon the expression, smothered verbedness.

Then how can you be expected to identify "smothered verbedness"? You can do it by knowing the following things about "smothered verbs:"

1. **"Smothered verbs"** are not identifiable parts of speech, but you should suspect the concept of smothered verbs to be at work when your sentences contain words that **appear** to be verbs altered by the addition of a suffix such as "-tion," as in "inspection," or "-ment," as in "statement."
2. **"Smothered verbs,"** in spite of what the name implies, are not and never were verbs. It naturally follows that they cannot function as verbs. If you develop a sentence that contains a word that appears to be a verb altered by the addition of a suffix, and the sentence requires an actual verb to support this "altered verb," then suspect a smothered verb construction. Such a sentence is "He *conducted* an *inspect*ion of the barracks."
3. **Smothered** verb construction almost invariably increases the number of words in a sentence. If there is a more direct way of saying what you want to say, suspect smothered verb construction.

For example:

This is smothered verb construction.

"He *conducted* an *inspect*ion of the barracks."

This is not smothered verb construction.

"He *inspected* the barracks."

Let's try an experiment in which we will review all that we have covered to this point concerning smothered verbs.

Here is a word. Identify it by checking one of the responses that follow.

EXAMINE

☐ 1. "Examine" is a verb.

☐ 2. "Examine" is a noun.

☐ 3. "Examine" is an adverb.

Correct; it is a verb. Now here is a word derived from that verb and used in a sentence:

Examining students is a difficult task.

☐ 1. "Examining," as it is used in the sentence, is a verb.

☐ 2. "Examining," as it is used in the sentence, is a smothered verb.

☐ 3. "Examining," as it is used in the sentence, is a verbal.

As the word is used in the sentence, it is recognizable as a verbal (a gerund) by its form and function. Now here is another word that is very much like the basic word **"examine."** Identify it by checking one of the responses below.

EXAMINATION

☐ 1. "Examination" is a verbal.

☐ 2. "Examination" is a verb.

☐ 3. "Examination" is a noun.

Correct again; it is a noun. Now, identify the word "examination" further by checking one of the responses below.

☐ 1. It is a smothered verb.

☐ 2. It is not a smothered verb.

☐ 3. It cannot be identified as a smothered verb.

Even though it **appears** to have been derived from the verb "examine" and even though it has the "-tion" suffix, you cannot identify an isolated word such as "examination" as being a smothered verb. This is because **a smothered verb is not a word; it is a concept concerning word use.**

Let's go on with our experiment. Here is the word "examination" used in a sentence. After reading the sentence, check one of the responses that follow.

I am preparing an examination for my students.

☐ 1. The sentence is an example of smothered verb construction.

☐ 2. The sentence is not an example of smothered verb construction.

The correct response is number two: it is not smothered verb construction. Is there a more direct way of saying what is intended? Would you say "I am preparing a **test** for my students"? That isn't more direct. It just substitutes the word "test" for "examination," and "examination" is a perfectly acceptable noun.

Here is the word "examination" used in another sentence:

I will conduct an examination of the aircraft records.

Is **that** smothered verb construction? Before you answer, examine the sentence, and ask yourself these questions:

1. Why is the word "conduct" in the sentence?
2. Is there a word in the sentence that appears to have been a verb altered by the addition of a suffix?
3. Can this word that appears to have been altered function as a verb?
4. Can the sentence be written more directly without changing its meaning?
5. In what way can it be written more directly?

Here is the way you should have answered those questions:

1. The word "conduct" is there because the sentence requires a verb.
2. Yes, there is such a word. The word is "examination."
3. Although it appears to have been derived from the verb "examine," the word "examination" cannot function as a verb.
4. Yes, the sentence can be written more directly without changing its meaning.
5. "I will examine the aircraft records."

Now, answer the original question. Is this sentence smothered verb construction?

I will conduct an examination of the aircraft records.

☐ 1. Yes

☐ 2. No

Yes, it is.

Here is another sentence with the word "examination." Before checking one of the responses that follow, compare this sentence with the preceding sentence before it was rewritten.

I will conduct an examination of my students.

☐ 1. The sentence is an example of smothered verb construction.

☐ 2. The sentence is not an example of smothered verb construction.

It is not smothered verb construction, but it **looks** like smothered verb construction, doesn't it?

Do you remember that we said "the term 'a smothered verb' describes the characteristics of certain words within the sentence, and the use of these words must occur **under certain conditions** if the term is to be valid"? This is one of those times when the "certain conditions" are all-important. Suppose you were an instructor at an all-girl college, and you wanted to inform the parents of your students of the following:

I will conduct an examination of my students on March 17th.

And suppose you were so smothered verb conscious that you wrote it this way instead:

"I will examine my students on March 17th."

What do you bet that some of the parents who are not knowledgeable in effective writing withdraw their fair daughters from your class and their endowments from the college.

"Whattya mean you're going to **examine** my daughter?"

Go on to a review of verbs, verbals, and smothered verbs that follows.

Review of Verbs, Verbals, and Smothered Verbs

VERBS

1. **Transitive verbs have direct objects on which they act.**

   We *like* verbs.

2. **Intransitive verbs require no direct objects.**

   Verbs *swing.*

3. **Linking verbs connect the subject with words that describe or can be equated with the subject.**

   Verbs *are* predictable.

4. **A verb has tense.**

   A verb *has* tense today.
   It *had* tense all day yesterday.
   It *will have* tense tomorrow if the BOMB doesn't get us.

5. **A verb has number. It must agree in number with its subject.**

   A noun *is* a real drag.
   Verbs, on the other hand, *are* inspirational.

6. **A verb has voice. It "speaks" in the active or passive voice.**

   Verbs *can drive* a sensitive individual nuts.
   A sensitive individual *can be driven* nuts by verbs, by verbs, by verbs,

VERBALS

1. **Three forms of verbals are the infinitive, the participle, and the gerund.**

2. **The infinitive has a variety of uses.**

   To recognize an infinitive on sight is not enough. It is equally important *to know* what an infinitive is able *to do* for the emphasis within your sentences.

3. **The participle can only be used as a modifier.**

   A *condensed* concept stated in a single word and *having* an "-ed" or an "-ing" ending is evidence that there is a participle around.

4. **A gerund can only be used as a noun.**

   Recognizing a gerund is also important.

SMOTHERED VERBS

1. **A smothered verb is not a word: it is a concept concerning the use of certain words under certain conditions.**

   You should effect an evaluation of this sentence to see if it is smothered verb construction.

2. **Smothered verb construction is to be suspected when a sentence contains a word or words that appear to have been derived from verbs and altered by the addition of certain suffixes.**

   A single word such as "construction" is not a smothered verb, but such a word contributes to "smothered verbedness" when you *derive a construction* that looks like this.

3. **Smothered verbs almost invariably increase the number of words in a sentence. If the sentence can be written in a more direct way without any loss of meaning, it is probably smothered verb construction.**

   If you find that you have *caused the development* of smothered verb construction, *develop* the sentence another way.

4. **Whether or not a sentence is smothered verb construction depends, to a great extent, on the precise idea you are attempting to communicate.**

   "Implement an inspection" would not be smothered verb construction if it means "to cause an inspection to be performed."
   "Implement an inspection" would be smothered verb construction if it means "to inspect."

Go on to a study of another part of speech, the pronoun.

The Parts of Speech—The Pronoun

WITH THE POSSIBLE exception of the verb, there is probably no other part of speech more troublesome than the pronoun. As you know, we use a pronoun in the place of some noun (the pronoun's **antecedent)** to avoid our having to repeat the noun over and over again. When the writer constructs a sentence in which the antecedent is missing or is only implied, the reader has a tough time determining what the pronoun refers to. Here is an example of this type of construction:

When at home, he told us many stories of the old West.

In that example, the antecedent is missing, and the reader doesn't know **who** was at home, the story teller or the listeners.

In the exercises that follow, we give you a rule of pronoun use and a short exercise in the application of the rule. Here is the first rule:

1. **The antecedent of a pronoun should be clear. It should not be missing nor should it be implied.**

In the following exercise sentences, check the one in which the antecedent is missing.

☐ 1. He bought groceries, and spent most of it on meat.

☐ 2. Of the money spent on groceries, most was spent on meat.

It is in the first sentence that the pronoun antecedent is missing. There is no pronoun in sentence number two.

Here is the second rule of pronoun use:

2. **When the pronoun reference is unclear, it is best to substitute a noun for the inexact pronoun instead of changing the antecedent.**

Here is a basic sentence with an unclear pronoun reference. After you have examined the sentence, check the sentence below that is more effective in meeting the requirement of the preceding rule.

When the transmission made a loud noise, we stopped it to see what was wrong.

☐ 1. When the transmission in the car made a loud noise, we stopped it to see what was wrong.

☐ 2. When the transmission made a loud noise, we stopped the car to see what was wrong.

In the first sentence, the antecedent is changed in violation of the rule, and the pronoun reference is no clearer than it was. The second sentence has a noun substituted for the pronoun, and the sentence is improved.

Here is the third rule of pronoun use:

3. **The antecedent of a pronoun should not be a noun used as an adjective nor should it be a possessive noun.**

Here is a sentence in which the antecedent of the pronoun is used as an adjective. Rewrite the sentence in the space provided to conform to the preceding rule.

Before the mine detector could register a metal contact, it exploded.

_____

_____

Your sentence should look approximately like this one:

Before the detector could register a metal contact, the mine exploded.

And here is a sentence in which the antecedent is a possessive noun. Rewrite the sentence in the space provided to conform to the preceding rule.

When the owner attempted to put the horse's saddle on, it jumped the fence.

_____

_____

Here is our version of the sentence:

When the owner attempted to saddle the horse, it jumped the fence.

You should not have rewritten the sentence this way:

When the owner attempted to put the saddle on, the horse jumped the fence.

That version of the sentence remains unclear. It sounds as though the owner tried to put the saddle on himself, and the horse jumped the fence out of anger or jealousy.

Here is rule number four:

4. **When a pronoun appears to refer to two antecedents, rephrase the sentence or substitute a noun for the pronoun.**

Here is a sentence in which the pronoun appears to refer to two antecedents. After reading the sentence, check one or more of the sentences below that are effective in meeting the requirement of the preceding rule.

When Sergeant White attended a seminar conducted by Colonel Maloy, he didn't know that he would be dead in two weeks.

☐ 1. When Sergeant White attended a seminar conducted by Colonel Maloy, he didn't know that Colonel Maloy would be dead in two weeks.

☐ 2. Sergeant White didn't know that Colonel Maloy would be dead in two weeks when he attended Colonel Maloy's seminar.

You should have checked both of the sentences as meeting the requirement of the rule. The first sentence substitutes a noun for the pronoun, and the second sentence has been rephrased to clear up the pronoun reference.

Here is rule number five:

5. **Two antecedents joined by "or" or "nor" should be referred to by a singular pronoun.**

Here is a basic sentence. It is incorrect. Rewrite the sentence in the space provided to conform to the preceding rule.

Neither James nor Frank has their pants correctly pressed.

_____

_____

Here is the way in which you should have rewritten the sentence:

Neither James nor Frank has his pants correctly pressed.

Here is the sixth rule of pronoun use:

6. **Two antecedents joined by "and" should be referred to by a plural pronoun.**

Check the sentence below that conforms to the requirement of the preceding rule.

☐ 1. A Volkswagen and a Cadillac are different from one another in its own subtle ways.

☐ 2. Boys and girls have their subtle differences too.

The second sentence is the one in which the pronoun agrees with its compound antecedent in number. You should have checked number two.

Here is your last rule of pronoun use:

7. **A collective noun used as an antecedent takes a singular pronoun if the collective is thought of as a unit, and it takes a plural pronoun if the collective noun is interpreted as referring to individual members.**

That's a long rule, but it isn't complicated. We have already seen something similar in subject and verb agreement in number. At times, you can say "The public *has*," and at other times you can say "The public *have*." The same type of agreement in number is at work here. Check one or more of the following sentences in which there is agreement in number between the pronoun and its collective antecedent.

☐ 1. The audience was generous in its applause.

☐ 2. The audience shifted restlessly in their seats.

There is agreement in number between the pronoun and its antecedent in both of the preceding sentences.

This concludes our coverage of pronouns and their antecedents. Before going on to a study of modifiers, review the pronoun rules on the following page.

Review of Pronoun Rules

1. **The antecedent of a pronoun should be clear. It should not be missing nor should it be implied.**

2. **When the pronoun reference is unclear, it is best to substitute a noun for the inexact pronoun instead of changing the antecedent.**

3. **The antecedent of a pronoun should not be a noun used as an adjective nor should it be a possessive noun.**

4. **When a pronoun appears to refer to two antecedents, rephrase the sentence or substitute a noun for the pronoun.**

5. **Two singular antecedents joined by "or" or "nor" should be referred to by a singular pronoun.**

6. **Two singular antecedents joined by "and" should be referred to by a plural pronoun.**

7. **A collective noun used as an antecedent takes a singular pronoun if the collective is thought of as a unit, and it takes a plural pronoun if the collective noun is interpreted as referring to individual members.**

Go on to a study of modifiers.

The Parts of Speech—Modifiers

MODIFIERS CAN BE SINGLE words such as adjectives and adverbs, or they can be entire phrases and clauses. Modifiers have a simple purpose: to qualify, to alter, to moderate, or to amplify the meaning of the word or words that they modify. An understanding of the **placement** of modifiers, however, is not as simple as an understanding of the purpose of modifiers. This **placement** of modifiers is the area of modifier use that we cover in this text.

Here is an example of a **misplaced** modifier:

Sue was wearing a scarf around her head that was red.

How would you alter that sentence to correct the placement of the misplaced modifier? Check one or more of the responses below.

☐ 1. I would move the modifier "red" closer to the word that it modifies.

☐ 2. I would rephrase the sentence in such a way that there would be no doubt as to what "red" modifies.

Either of the responses is correct. You can move the modifier to a position that is closer to the word that it modifies, or, if this is impractical, you can rephrase the entire sentence.

The following sentence has a misplaced modifier. Correct the placement of this modifier by doing either of the two things mentioned above.

Captain Stow lived with a friend whom he trusted in a small house.

Rewrite the sentence in this space.

_____

_____

Here are two ways in which the sentence could be altered. Compare your version with these.

Captain Stow lived in a small house with a friend whom he trusted.

Captain Stow and a friend whom he trusted lived in a small house.

Here is another sentence with a misplaced modifier. Rewrite it in the space provided.

Romeo received word that Juliet was dead from a messenger.

_____

_____

Here are two ways you could have rewritten the sentence:

Romeo received word from a messenger that Juliet was dead.

From a messenger, Romeo received word that Juliet was dead.

In both cases, you will note that the modifier, "from a messenger," is moved closer to the word that it modifies.

Here is another form of the misplaced modifier. This modifier is called a "two-way" modifier because it can be interpreted to modify either of two words. Here is an example of the two-way modifier.

John said during the meeting Jones acted like a fool.

The following are rewritten versions of the basic sentence. Select a response that applies to each sentence.

John said Jones acted like a fool during the meeting.

☐ 1. The modifier "during the meeting" modifies "said."

☐ 2. The modifier "during the meeting" modifies "acted."

The correct response is number two. In that version, the modifier was moved to a position nearer to the word that we wanted it to modify.

During the meeting, John said Jones acted like a fool.

☐ 1. The modifier "during the meeting" modifies "said."

☐ 2. The modifier "during the meeting" modifies "acted."

The correct response is number one. Notice that the construction had to be altered to make the modifier modify "said." The modifier was actually closer to "said" in the basic sentence, and, in the basic sentence, there was confusion about what was modified. This serves to demonstrate that it is not always possible to correct the placement of a misplaced modifier by moving it to a position that is physically closer to the word it modifies.

Here is another sentence in which there is trouble with the modifier. Tell us what is wrong with it by checking one of the responses below.

Reading in the library, the sound of an ambulance siren was distracting.

☐ 1. There is a misplaced modifier in the sentence.

☐ 2. There is no word or combination of words that can be modified by "reading in the library."

The correct response is number two. The modifier in the sentence is not misplaced: there is nothing for it to modify. The problem is not one of a misplaced modifier: the problem is one of a **dangling** modifier. Dangling modifiers are easy to correct because you just have to furnish something for the modifier to modify. In the sentence above, it's as easy to correct as this:

While I was reading in the library, the sound of an ambulance siren was distracting.

Which of the two sentences that follow has a dangling modifier? Check the response of your choice.

☐ 1. To get a better view of the screen, we had to change our seats.

☐ 2. While watching television, the doorbell rang.

The last sentence contains the dangling modifier.

Here are some more sentences with modifier trouble. Rewrite each sentence in the space provided. When you have finished them all, check your sentences against our versions of the sentences.

1. I went to see a crippled man who had a wooden leg named Tom Swift.

_____

_____

2. Never take your eye off the ball until knocked from the tee.

_____

_____

3. A jet flew over the city vibrating noisily.

_____

_____

4. He performed his job as a ditch digger in the sanitation department well.

_____

_____

5. The dog fell into a hole chasing a fox.

_____

_____

Here are our versions of the sentences. Checks yours against these.

1. I went to see a crippled man named Tom Swift who had a wooden leg.
2. Never take your eye off the ball until the ball is knocked from the tee.
3. A jet, vibrating noisily, flew over the city.
4. He performed his job well as a ditch digger in the sanitation department.
5. The dog, chasing a fox, fell into a hole.

This concludes the portion of the text on the parts of speech. Go on to the next page for a quick review of this entire portion of the text.

Review

1. **Verb number** and **voice** are the most troublesome areas in verb use for Air University writers.

2. **The passive voice** is not all bad. In your writing, strive for a judicious mixture of active and passive voices. If it is your purpose to tell **what** was done rather than **who** did it, then use the passive voice.

3. The most commonly used **verbals** are the **infinitive,** the **participle,** and the **gerund.** The gerund has an "-ing" ending, and is used as a noun only. The participle's usual endings are "-ed" or "-ing," and it is used as a modifier only. The infinitive has a variety of uses, and it is recognizable by its "to" form.

4. The most common use of verbals is that of writing shorthand by which we control the emphasis within our sentences.

5. **A smothered verb** is not a part of speech. It is, instead, a concept concerning the use of certain words under certain conditions.

6. The antecedent of a pronoun must be clear, and the pronoun must agree in number with its antecedent.

   Dangling modifiers and **misplaced** modifiers are the most common errors in the use of modifiers.

Introduction to the Sentence

WITH OUR STUDY of certain parts of speech behind us, we can turn our attention to the sentence. If parts of speech are the raw materials of sentences, then, certainly, sentences are the raw materials of effective writing. Any individual who can construct an effective sentence and who can control the relationship between that sentence and other sentences is an effective writer.

What is an effective sentence? Suppose YOU tell us by checking one of the responses below.

- ☐ 1. An effective sentence is one in which the various parts of speech are correctly used.
- ☐ 2. An effective sentence is one that communicates the idea that it was designed to communicate.

The correct response is number two. Here are two sentences. Which of these sentences, in your opinion, better communicates the idea that *it was designed to communicate?*

- ☐ 1. The sky is blue.
- ☐ 2. The reflection of solar illumination under specific atmospheric conditions produces an effect which the brain interprets as those wave lengths of light on the visible spectrum that we have been culturally conditioned to call "blue."

Each of the preceding sentences is equal to the other in communicating the idea *that it was designed to communicate.* The first sentence states a simple fact without qualification, while the second sentence goes on to provide a scientific basis for the fact.

If sentences about a subject such as the color of the sky can come in such a wide variety of form and content, what is it that should be controlling the form and content of the sentences that you write?

- ☐ 1. Your ability as a writer.
- ☐ 2. Your reader and the use he is expected to make of the material.

The correct response is number two.

While your ability as a writer will go a long way in determining the form and the content of the sentences you write, it is your reader and the use he will make of the material that should be the primary factor controlling the form and content of your sentences. As an example of this, the preceding sentence contains 2 distinct ideas, an abverbial clause and a main clause, and 50 words. We would not (nor would you) write that way for a group of grade school students, but it is acceptable for an Air University reader. But, even so, we have to admit that 50 word sentences do not normally communicate as well as shorter sentences.

Right?

A study of sentence form and content follows on the next page.

Sentence Form and Content

What do we mean when we say "sentence form and content"? Let's examine a few sentences and see.

When a sentence opens with an introductory adverbial clause, it has a certain "form."

It has another "form" when the adverbial clause is moved to another position.

And, we are sure you'll agree, it has another "form" when it contains a nonrestrictive, parenthetical expression.

That's what we mean by the "form" of a sentence. It is the physical appearance of a sentence. You expect certain sentence parts to appear in certain places within the sentence. When those parts are moved to an unexpected location within the sentence, then the sentence is no longer logical in form.

Well, how about sentence "content"?

"Content" is the message the sentence contains. When the message is perniciously obfuscated through bombast or parsimonious grammar, you will agree that communication breaks down.

As was the case with sentence form, you expect certain sentences to contain certain messages or parts of messages. When they do not, the sentence is no longer logical in content.

To further introduce the subject area of sentence form and content, we decided to remind you of a little poem and then show you a variation of the poem. Here is the original poem. You probably recognize it.

> Thirty days hath September,
> April, June, and November,
> February has twenty-eight alone,
> All the rest have thirty-one;
> Excepting leap year,—that's the time
> When February's days are twenty-nine.

Most of us use that poem, at one time or another, to compute the number of days in a given month. Here is another version of it. Have you heard this or one like it?

> Thirty days hath September,
> April, June, and no wonder,
> All the rest have peanut butter
> Except grandmother, and she wears gym shoes.

That is a humorous version of the first poem. What has all this to do with sentence form and content? Well, you can decide that by first deciding why the second poem is humorous. Select one of the responses that follow.

☐ 1. The second poem is humorous because it is a nonsense rhyme.

☐ 2. The second poem is humorous because it is in the form of the first poem, but it violates the logical content of the first poem.

The correct response is number two.

The second poem is humorous because it uses the form of the first poem, and intentionally violates the logical content of the first poem. This process is the basis of much of our humor, and, like it or not, we often do the same thing unintentionally when we write. Effective writing requires logical order in form, content, and continuity. Here are three narratives about the same subject, the troposphere. After you read each narrative, select one of the responses that follow.

1. The lowest level of the atmosphere is called the troposphere. This layer is only five to ten miles thick, but it contains 90 percent of the earth's atmosphere. The peak of Mount Everest, which is 29,028 feet high, is well within the upper limits of the troposphere. It is within the troposphere that most aircraft flights take place.

☐ a. Both the form and content of the preceding narrative are logical.

☐ b. The content of the preceding narrative is logical, but the form is illogical.

☐ c. The form of the preceding narrative is logical, but the content is illogical.

In the preceding narrative, both the form and content are logical. This situation can exist only when the individual sentences are logical in form and content, and there is logical continuity between the sentences.

Here is the narrative in another form:

2. The lowest level of the atmosphere is called the tropcsphere. This layer is only five to ten miles thick, but it contains James Bond, Brigette Bardot, and the abominable snowman. The peak of Mount Everest, which is 29,028 feet high, is well supplied with abominable snowmen. It is within the troposphere that most flights of fancy take place.

☐ a. The content of the preceding narrative is logical, but the form is illogical.

☐ b. The form of the preceding narrative is logical, but the content is illogical.

Here is the narrative in yet another form:

3. The lowest level of the atmosphere is called the troposphere. The peak of Mount Everest at 29,028 feet, aircraft flights, and 90 percent of the earth's atmosphere is what the troposphere contains all of or most of in its five to ten mile thickness.

☐ a. The content of the preceding narrative is logical, but the form is illogical.

☐ b. The form of the preceding narrative is logical, but the content is illogical.

In narrative number two, the form is logical (it is the same form as the first narrative), but the content is illogical.

In narrative number three, the content is logical (it is the same content as the first narrative), but the form is illogical. Your responses should have been "b." to number two and "a." to number three.

In the exercises that follow, we complete our study of sentence form and content by giving you your first opportunity to do some original writing in the text. We want you to identify and to correct a breakdown in logical form and content.

Here are three basic sentences that you are to work with. Read them carefully and, as you read, analyze the relationship of one to another.

(1) Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. (2) Air University writing is a form of Air Force writing in which form and content must be parallel and complementary to be successful. (3) The reader can advance uniformly through successful Air University writing because the ideas are presented in a logical form.

Let's take them one at a time. How about the first sentence? Select a response from the alternatives that follow.

☐ 1. It is an effective lead sentence, and the idea that it communicates is a logical one. It should not be rewritten.

☐ 2. It is a good lead sentence, but it is illogical in content.

☐ 3. It is a poor lead sentence. It should be rewritten.

The correct response is number one. It is logical in form and content. For reasons other than taste or style, it should not be rewritten.

Here is the first sentence in the context of the second. After you have evaluated them together, select a response that applies to the second sentence.

(1) Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. (2) Air University writing is a form of Air Force writing in which form and content must be parallel and complementary to be successful.

☐ 1. The second sentence merely restates the content of the first. It does nothing to advance the thought of the first sentence.

☐ 2. The second sentence is an effective sentence. It does not have to be rewritten to logically follow the first.

☐ 3. The idea communicated by the second sentence is illogical. It cannot, therefore, follow the logical idea of the first sentence.

The correct response is number one. The second response, the one that says sentence number two is an effective sentence, is not true. In isolation, the second sentence is effective, but in the context of the first sentence, it is illogical in content. The last response is untrue because the second sentence is nothing more than a restatement, in other terms, of the idea advanced in the first sentence.

We will now give you the first sentence again and three versions of the second sentence. You are to evaluate each of them in the context of the first sentence and select the version that you prefer.

☐ 1. Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. Because Air University writing makes form and content parallel and complementary, it is a form of Air Force writing.

☐ 2. Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air University writing.

☐ 3. Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. Because Air University writing is a form of Air Force writing, it, too, must make form and content parallel and complementary.

The form of the second sentence in choice number one is not bad, but its content is illogical. The content of the second sentence in choice number two is logical, but it is in the form of a simple declarative statement like the first sentence. There is no logical transition between the two sentences. The third version of the sentence is the best one.

Here are two sentences as they now stand. To them, we have added the original third sentence. Does it fit in form and content?

Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. Because Air University writing is a form of Air Force writing, it, too, must make form and content parallel and complementary. The reader can advance uniformly through successful Air University writing because the ideas are presented in a logical form.

Well, does it fit? It could be better, and we want you to rewrite the third sentence in such a way that it logically follows the first two. Rewrite your sentence in the space provided. Do not worry about sentence length. Make it as short or as long as you desire.

Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. Because Air University writing is a form of Air Force writing, it, too, must make form and content parallel and complementary.

We cannot guess what form your sentence took, but we offer the following as our version of the third sentence. Yours could be quite different from ours and still be perfectly acceptable.

This logical presentation of ideas allows the reader to advance uniformly through Air University writing extracting the significant points that have been set out for him.

Here are the three original sentences followed by our version of their rewritten form. Compare the two versions carefully before going on.

Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. Air University writing is a form of Air Force writing in which form and content must be parallel and complementary to be successful. The reader can advance uniformly through successful Air University writing because the ideas are presented in a logical form.

Form and content must be parallel and complementary in successful Air Force writing. Because Air University writing is a form of Air Force writing, it, too, must make form and content parallel and complementary. This logical presentation of ideas allows the reader to advance uniformly through Air University writing, extracting the significant points that have been set out for him.

Why is the second version better than the first? Because, and you've heard it somewhere before, in the second version, the form and content are parallel and complementary.

Transitions Within and Between Sentences

In the preceding section on sentence form and content, we said that the effective writer is one who can construct effective sentences and control the relationship between sentences. We saw that careful attention to sentence form and content is necessary if the writer is to construct logical and coherent sentences. There is another feature of sentence construction that is just as important as form and content. That feature is the careful use of transitional devices within and between sentences.

To understand the role of transitions within and between sentences, let's look at the way in which the sentence has evolved through the years.

> onceuponatimetherewasnosuchthingsastransitionaldeviceswithinandbetween sentencesspacesbetweenwordsandsentencesdidnotexistandpunctuationmarks weremanyyearsinthefuture itcametopassthatsomescholarcontrivedtheideaof separatingonesentencefromanotherwithablankspace it was not too long after this that another scholar hit upon the next logical step of separating the words within the sentence with blank spaces while this did much to end some of the confusion it was still a little difficult to tell where one sentence ended and another began to resolve this the period was invented. closely on the heels of the period came the capital letter to begin the sentence. We were on our way. At this point in the evolution of the sentence it was up to a fiendishly clever or sadistic scholar to introduce internal punctuation marks, and the world, by the way, has not been the same since.

Spaces between words and sentences, periods at the end of declarative sentences, and capital letters at the beginning of sentences are so much a part of our written language that we rarely give them a second thought.

Other transitional devices, however, require more of our attention than the customary second thought. One of these devices is the whole family of internal punctuation marks, and you have seen, in Part One of this text, that the use of these marks requires conscientious effort.

The use of punctuation marks is a common way of effecting transitions within and between sentences, but an equally common and far less understood way is through the conscious use of selected words.

The selected words that we have in mind are these:

1. **Conjunctions** as they are used within (and occasionally between) sentences.
2. **Key words and phrases** as they are used to establish a thematic relationship between sentences through repetition.

Let's take a look at conjunctions as transitional devices within sentences.

Conjunctions As Transitional Devices Within Sentences

Of all the parts of speech that are used for transitions within sentences, the most common by far is the conjunction. A conjunction is a sure sign from the writer to the reader that a transition is taking place within the sentence.

Here are the two types of conjunctions that we will examine in their role as transitional devices:

1. The **coordinating conjunction** and
2. The **subordinating conjunction.**

In the exercises that follow, in order not to obscure the role of the conjunction as a transitional device, we have eliminated all of the sentence parts except for the conjunction and, if any, related punctuation marks. Your exercise sentences will look like this:

_____ , and _____

After each exercise sentence is presented, you will be asked to check a single response from the two that we offer.

Here is your first exercise sentence:

_____ , and _____ .

☐ 1. In the exercise sentence, "and" is a **coordinating conjunction.** In the position that it occupies, it indicates that the information preceding the comma is equal in importance to the information following the comma.

☐ 2. In the exercise sentence, "and" is a **subordinating conjunction.** In the position that it occupies, it subordinates the information preceding the comma to the information following the comma.

The correct response is number one. The conjunction "and" in the position that it occupies tells the reader that the information preceding the comma is equal in importance to and **related** to the information following the comma.

Here is a space with the "and" and the associated comma furnished. Construct a sentence to occupy the blank spaces.

_____, and

_____

Your sentence should have consisted of two independent clauses (each having its own subject and verb), and the clauses should be related in their context. Here is such a sentence against which you can evaluate your own:

We are all members of the Air Force, and it is important that we make a contribution to its mission.

Here is a space with the "because" and the associated comma furnished. You construct a sentence to occupy the blank spaces.

Because _____,

_____

We cannot begin to guess about the content of your sentence, but here is a model sentence against which you can evaluate your own.

Because we are members of the Air Force, it is important that we make a contribution to its mission.

Here is your second exercise sentence. Notice the conjunction being used, its position within the sentence, and the associated punctuation mark. All of these things are clues to the correct response in the exercise that follows the sentence.

Because _____ , _____

☐ 1. In the exercise sentence, "because" is a **subordinating conjunction.** In the position that it occupies, it subordinates the information preceding the comma to the information following the comma.

☐ 2. In the exercise sentence, "because" is a **coordinating** conjunction. In the position that it occupies, it indicates that the information preceding the comma is equal in importance to the information following the comma.

The correct response is number one. "Because," in its position in the sentence, subordinates the entire first part of the sentence to that part of the sentence following the comma.

There are so many conjunctions and combinations of conjunctions that can be used as transitional devices, we cannot hope to cover them all. We leave the subject of conjunctions as transitional devices with the hope that you will, in the future, pay very special attention to the way that you use conjunctions. We will now take a brief look at key words and phrases as they are used as transitional devices between sentences.

Key Words and Phrases As Transitional Devices Between Sentences

You have seen that conjunctions are effective transitional devices **within** sentences. You have seen that they serve to control the emphasis given to the various sentence parts. Key words and phrases used as transitional devices **between** sentences do not work in precisely the same way. Instead, key words and phrases serve to build **thematic continuity** between the sentences.

Before going on, stop to consider the paragraph you have just read. In it, there are several uses of key words and phrases that you should notice. In the second sentence, there is the conscious repetition of the phrase, "you have seen that." This serves to effectively relate the second sentence to the first. In addition, the construction of these two sentences is parallel. By that we mean that the **form** of the two sentences is the same. In the third sentence, the phrase "do not work in precisely the same way" implies that previous information is being compared with new information. In the fourth sentence, we have repeated the "key words and phrases" of the third sentence. It is through such conscious use and repetition of key words and phrases similar to these that we develop transitions **between** sentences. It is through transitions between sentences that we develop **continuity**.

Here is a paragraph in which the continuity is good. In it, there are numerous ways in which the writer developed the transitions between his sentences. Read the paragraph, and see how many of the key words and phrases that you can find. Be ready to describe the ways in which these key words and phrases are used as transitional devices.

Texas is a hunter's paradise. Fox, quail, and other small game abound in the piney woods of East Texas. In the High Plains of northwest Texas, coyotes, jack rabbits, and prairie dogs challenge the hunter who prefers the wide open spaces. In the south Texas hill country, scrub forests and well-traveled game trails invite him to try his hand at bagging deer. In the hills and dry washes of West Texas, the hunter must be constantly alert for desert cats and rattlesnakes as he stalks wild goats and sheep. There is probably no other place in the world in which such a diversity of game is so near at hand as in Texas.

There are at least three obvious uses of key words and phrases as transitional devices in the preceding paragraph. After you have listed them in the spaces provided below, you may check your responses against ours.

1. _____
_____

2. _____
_____

3. _____
_____

1. The repetition of the word "Texas" in each of the sentences. A pronoun in the place of one or more of the uses of "Texas" would have served just as well.
2. The repetition of an introductory adverbial phrase in three of the sentences. The repetition of an introductory adverbial **clause** (with its own subject and verb) would have accomplished the same thing. As we have said, this repetition of a construction form is called **parallel construction,** and it is a very common transitional device between sentences.
3. The repetition of the word "hunter" or a substitute for this word throughout the narrative.

In the exercise that follows, you have the opportunity to use the type of transitional devices just covered. Remember that the key to a correct use is the **conscious repetition** of a key word or phrase or a substitute for that key word or phrase. If you want to try your hand at parallel construction, that's fine with us.

Here are four sentences about effective writing. In the form that they now exist, there is no continuity between them. They are simply isolated facts. Your job is to relate these sentences to one another through the conscious use of transitional devices. **Do not** change the order in which these sentences appear. Other than that requirement, you are allowed to make any changes you desire to make. Rewrite your sentences in the spaces provided.

1. Effective writing is hard work.
2. Effective writing requires the conscious use of selected punctuation marks.
3. Effective writing requires constant attention to details such as verb voice, sentence form and content, and the conscious use of transitional devices within and between sentences.
4. Effective writing is not child's play.

Write the revised version of the sentences in these spaces. Make any changes you like in sentence form, but do not change the order in which the facts appear.

Evaluate your effort against a model response on the following page.

Here are two versions of the rewritten sentences. Your version could be totally unlike either of these, and still be acceptable. These are model responses only, and are furnished in order that you will have something against which to evaluate your own response.

> Effective writing is hard work which requires the conscious use of selected punctuation marks. In addition to punctuation marks, the effective writer must pay constant attention to details such as verb voice, sentence form and content, and the conscious use of transitional devices within and between sentences. In sum, the effective writer knows that his task is not child's play.

In that version, we introduced the term "the effective writer" to serve as a transitional device. We combined sentences one and two into one sentence, and we repeated the reference to punctuation marks in our second sentence.

> Effective writing is hard work. It requires the conscious use of selected punctuation marks, and it requires constant attention to details. Some of these details are verb voice, sentence form and content, and the conscious use of transitional devices within and between sentences. This requirement to attend to details serves to prove that effective writing is not child's play.

You identify the transitional devices we used in that version. No written response is required.

As we said before, it is not necessary for your version of the sentences to be like ours. What IS necessary is that your sentences be organized into a logical and coherent WHOLE, and this organization be accomplished through the conscious use of key words and phrases as transitional devices. Obviously, this is not something on which we can place arbitrary limits. It has to come from your own desire and ability to improve your writing skills.

In the study of the basic sentence, we have purposely avoided such subject areas as word choice and word order. Subject areas similar to these are more appropriate in a grammar text.

Before going on to a study of the paragraph, be sure and study the brief review that follows on the next page.

Review of the Sentence

1. **An effective sentence is one that communicates the idea that it was designed to communicate.**

   One more crack like that and I'll clobber you.

2. **Sentence form and content is primarily decided by your reader and the use he is expected to make of the material.**

   Look! Look! See Spot chase Puff.
   If you will but observe the actions of a specific canine bearing a name based upon the coloration of his epidermal filaments, you will see said canine in pursuit of a specific feline bearing a name that is most probably based upon its abundance of epidermal filaments.

3. **Effective writing requires logical order in form, content, and continuity.**

   Although form is a means to arrange content, nonetheless content means that which is exclusive of form, insofar as form does not include content, whatever that means.

4. **The conjunction is the most common device used for transitions within sentences.**

   The conjunction is an effective transitional device between sentence parts, and it can be used to control the emphasis within the sentence, and don't you forget it.

5. **The coordinating conjunction is used to effect a transition between equally important and related sentence parts.**

   This sentence part is important, and so is this part.

6. **The subordinating conjunction is used to subordinate one sentence part to another.**

   Because the last part of this sentence is more important than the first part, we introduce the sentence with a subordinating conjunction.

7. **The conscious repetition of key words and phrases or substitutes for these key words and phrases is the most common device used to effect transitions between sentences.**

   Conjunctions are fine for relating sentence parts, but they will not insure continuity between sentences. To do that, you must consciously develop and repeat key words and phrases. This conscious repetition will result in sentences that achieve and maintain continuity throughout your writing. This repetition will result in the additional advantage of requiring you to remain mentally alert as you write.

Introduction to the Paragraph

THE FACT THAT WE ARE MOVING from a study of the sentence to a study of the paragraph does not mean that we can forget about the sentence. Quite the contrary is true. A paragraph is no more effective than the sentences it contains, so you can be sure that we will continue to talk about sentences as we study the paragraph.

The study of paragraphs is a **big** subject area. It is so big, in fact, that the remainder of this text is concerned with just this subject area.

Before we get into a detailed study of paragraphs, let's take a broad look at paragraphs in general. Here is a model paragraph. We have omitted all the words and substituted Xs in their place so the words won't obscure the message we want to get across. Examine this model paragraph, and respond to the exercise that follows.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Check all of the responses below that you would use to describe the **physical appearance** of paragraphs.

- ☐ 1. Paragraphs consist of one or more sentences.
- ☐ 2. Paragraphs consist of related sentences that the writer presents as a unit of expression.
- ☐ 3. The first line of a paragraph is usually indented.
- ☐ 4. The last line of a paragraph is often shorter than the other lines.

You should have checked numbers one, three, and four as being descriptive of the **physical appearance** of paragraphs, though we hasten to add that number three does not apply to paragraphs in military correspondence. You should not have checked the second response because THAT response describes the reason for the paragraph's existence as a unit of expression.

Here is the second response again. Keep it in mind as we proceed through this discussion of paragraph development.

Paragraphs consist of related sentences that the writer presents as a unit of expression.

In studying about the ways in which effective paragraphs evolve, we will consider these three subject areas:

1. **Planning to write,**
2. **Organizing to write,** and
3. **Developing effective paragraphs.**

In these subject areas, we will see how an effective writer proceeds from an evaluation of his reader to an evaluation of his finished product, the effective paragraph.

Planning to Write

Here is a paragraph that might have been extracted from an orientation brochure that was prepared for newly inducted airmen. Read the paragraph, and make the necessary response to the exercise that follows.

> Personnel services at White AFB provide newly assigned airmen with both help and advice in getting settled. The CBPO in Building 500 maintains complete in-processing services during normal duty hours. In-processing is handled by the OD after normal duty hours and on weekends and holidays. One of the first things that personnel services ask you to do is to obtain a CMR box from the appropriate issuing authority. Since most of you arrive at WAFB without a POV, the registration procedures will not concern you. Most of the questions you now have about your adjustment to military life will be answered for you, but if you have questions of a strictly personal nature, you may take them to the NCOIC of your squadron. You may, if you desire, find the answers for yourself in the appropriate AFRs and AFMs as supplemented. You can be sure that all personnel services activities want to ease your transition from civilian to military life.

Of the three most critical questions that the writer of the preceding paragraph should have asked himself, he overlooked at least one of them in his **planning to write** stage. Here are the three questions. Of the three, which was most obviously neglected in the preceding paragraph. Check the response of your choice.

- ☐ 1. Why am I writing it?
- ☐ 2. Who will read it?
- ☐ 3. What reaction do I want my reader to have?

He most likely failed to ask himself "Who will read it?" As a result, he included abbreviations that the newly inducted airman could not be expected to interpret or understand.

Way back in the introduction to the sentence, we said that the primary thing that determines sentence form and content is "your reader and the use he is expected to make of the material." That was just another way of saying that you must find the answer to these three questions as you plan to write:

1. Why am I writing it?
2. Who will read it?
3. What reaction do I want my reader to have?

When you have found answers to these three questions, the writing task has just begun. The next step in the planning to write stage is so obvious that we won't even give you a clue as to what it is. We will, instead, ask that you identify it from the two alternatives that follow.

- ☐ 1. Find a comfortable place in which to write.
- ☐ 2. Decide upon and limit a subject area.

The correct response is number two, to decide upon and limit a subject area. There are times, of course, that the subject area will be decided for you, but this does not relieve you of the responsibility for limiting the subject area to a size that you can manage.

To illustrate the importance of limiting the subject area, tell us which of the following writing assignments you would prefer to undertake.

☐ 1. Write an Air Force text on "Effective Writing."

☐ 2. Write a text on those areas of effective writing skills that are identified as being areas of weakness for selected Air Force writers.

The second choice is the correct one, and, fortunately for the writers of this text, the second choice describes the exact way in which the subject area of this text was limited to a manageable size.

Here, then, are the things you must accomplish in the **planning to write** stage:

1. Ask yourself why you are writing.
2. Ask yourself who will read your material.
3. Ask yourself what reaction you want your reader to have.
4. Decide upon a subject area.
5. Limit the subject area.

On the following page, we go into the organizing to write phase.

Organizing to Write

There are many features of organizing to write that cannot be treated in a text of this type. This is because these features of organizing to write are highly individualized operations. Some of these operations are as follows:

1. Selecting the source materials for your research,
2. Conducting the research,
3. Taking notes and using note cards, and
4. Compiling a bibliography.

You can see that to cover those subject areas, this text would have to be one on "library use" and "how to study."

There are, however, three operations that are necessary in organizing to write that we can include. The three operations are these:

1. Listing ideas relative to your subject,
2. Grouping ideas under specific headings, and
3. Selecting a pattern of presentation.

After we discuss each of these operations briefly, we will give you an opportunity to apply them all. Let's begin with "listing ideas relative to your subject."

Suppose that you had the following writing assignment:

To compare the advantages and disadvantages of owning a compact car.

Now, without any thought of arranging the ideas in a sequence, list several ideas relative to your subject as they come to mind. **Do not** evaluate them for appropriateness at this time. That comes later. Use the spaces provided below.

Before going on, go back and eliminate any of the ideas that do not seem appropriate or will not contribute to the development of your writing assignment. Do this by lining through the items you want to throw out.

Although we cannot guess how many and what type of items you listed, your ideas probably included some of these:

Compact cars use less gasoline and oil.
They are cheaper to maintain.
They are dangerous in a serious accident.
There is insufficient luggage space.
They handle well in traffic.
They are too small for a large family.
Leg space is cramped.
They cost less to license.
They are tiring on long trips.
They sway in crosswinds.
Tire wear is less.

Your list of ideas could be much like ours, or it could be entirely different. The important thing is to list each and every idea as it comes to mind. Don't omit a single one. You can be selective later.

If you have evaluated your list of ideas and lined through the inappropriate items, now is the time to "group ideas under specific headings," the second point in our three-point operation. A glance at the title of the writing assignment will reveal two ready-made headings. Which of the following do you consider more logical as major headings for the writing assignment?

☐ 1. Advantages of owning a compact car.
Disadvantages of owning a compact car.

☐ 2. Advantages and disadvantages of owning a compact car.
Advantages and disadvantages of owning a luxury car.

The correct response is number one because the title of the writing assignment indicates these headings are appropriate. It will not be this easy to arrive at valid major headings for all of your writing assignments.

Let's go on now with the "grouping of ideas under specific headings." Go back to your original list of ideas, and transfer them to their appropriate headings on the following page. If you can derive any minor headings such as **"economy"** or **"size"** that you think are appropriate, then do so.

Advantages

Disadvantages

Here is the grouping of OUR ideas under specific headings. Your grouping of ideas does not have to be like this one. This list of ideas is furnished only as a guide.

Advantages

SIZE ADVANTAGE

They handle well in traffic.
Tire wear is less because weight is less.

ECONOMY ADVANTAGE

They use less gasoline and oil.
They are cheaper to maintain.
They cost less to license.

Disadvantages

SIZE DISADVANTAGE

They are dangerous in a serious accident.
There is insufficient luggage space.
Too small for a large family.
Leg space is cramped.
Tiring on long trips.
They sway in crosswinds.

ECONOMY DISADVANTAGE

None.

There is our list. Please note that we introduced subordinate headings. This made the task of grouping the ideas much easier. Go on now to the last part of this three-point operation.

After you have derived all of the ideas that you can, and after you have listed the appropriate ideas under major and subordinate headings, the time has come to select a pattern of presentation.

There are four **patterns of presentation** commonly used in Air Force writing. There are other patterns, but these are the most common:

1. The **topical** or **enumeration** pattern.
2. The **reason** or **problem solution** pattern.
3. The **time** pattern.
4. The **space** pattern.

We will describe each of these patterns. After we have done so, we want you to select the pattern you would use for the writing assignment concerning the advantages and disadvantages of owning a compact car.

1. The **topical** or **enumeration** pattern.
   This pattern consists of a general statement followed by a list of details, examples, quantities, or specifications. All of the support material is arranged in the sequence that provides for the most logical transition from one part to the next.

2. The **reason** or **problem solution** pattern.
   This is the pattern in which you advance an idea or in which you support a position. The logic of your position is presented along with various forms of support material such as facts or statistics.

3. The **time** pattern.
   In this pattern, there is a chronological flow of events or details from one point in time to another.

4. The **space** pattern.
   People, places, things, or events are described through the use of this pattern. To use this pattern, you start at some logical part, point, or position in the thing or event, and you proceed systematically until it is described.

With the patterns of presentation just described, can you choose the one you would use for the writing assignment, "to compare the advantages and disadvantages of owning a compact car"?

- ☐ 1. The **topical** or **enumeration** pattern.
- ☐ 2. The **reason** or **problem solution** pattern.
- ☐ 3. The **time** pattern.
- ☐ 4. The **space** pattern.

You probably chose number one, but numbers one, two, and four would all be suitable. It would be a little difficult to fit the writing assignment into pattern number three, the **time** pattern.

This completes our study of planning and organizing to write. Before going on to a study of paragraph development, please study the review material that follows.

Review

1. **There are three critical questions that the writer must ask himself in the "planning to write" stage. These questions are as follows:**
   Why am I writing?
   Who will read it?
   What reaction do I want my reader to have?

2. **During the "planning to write" stage, you must decide upon and limit a subject area.**

3. **"Organizing to write" consists primarily of these three operations:**
   Listing ideas relative to your subject,
   Grouping related ideas under specific headings, and
   Selecting a pattern of presentation.

4. **The patterns of presentation most often used in Air Force writing are these:**
   The topical or enumeration pattern,
   The reason or problem solution pattern,
   The time pattern, and
   The space pattern.

5. And finally, **paragraphs consist of related sentences that the writer presents as a unit of expression.**

Developing Effective Paragraphs

You would think that a person who could write effective sentences and who knew all there was to know about transitional devices could write effective paragraphs. Right?

Wrong. To be sure, effective paragraphs require effective sentences and a knowledgeable use of transitional devices, but they require more. They require a knowledge of paragraph parts and how these parts work with each other.

A few pages ago, we showed you a model paragraph similar to this one:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

And we told you that the following statements applied to most paragraphs:

1. Paragraphs consist of one or more sentences.
2. The first line of a paragraph is usually indented.
3. The last line of a paragraph is often shorter than the other lines.

In addition to the above, what else can you say about the model paragraph *that is generally true of most paragraphs?*

☐ 1. It contains three simulated sentences.

☐ 2. It is made up of a bunch of Xs.

☐ 3. It has a beginning, a middle, and an ending.

The last response is correct. Most paragraphs have these three parts, and it is the relationship of these three parts that separates effective paragraphs from ineffective paragraphs.

Which of the following is the best description of an effective paragraph?

☐ 1. It is a collection of one or more related sentences in which there has been a conscientious effort to build continuity between the sentences through the use of thematic or mechanical transitional devices.

☐ 2. It is a collection of one or more related sentences in which there has been a conscientious effort to relate its beginning to all that follows and to relate its beginning (and all that follows) to its ending.

The correct response is number two.

Response number one describes sentences within the paragraph, but it doesn't say enough. If you are to write effective paragraphs, you must **not** think of them as collections of related sentences grouped into a convenient form called "the paragraph." You don't think of the sentence as a collection of related words grouped into a convenient form called "the sentence," do you? Of course not. The sentence is far too dynamic for such a convenient definition. Well, so is the paragraph.

Try to think of a paragraph as a living and breathing organism in which its well-being depends on the proper functioning of all of its parts.

Even without knowing a lot about automobiles, you could probably guess the function of any one of its parts because you already know and understand the function of the whole vehicle. Well, the same is true of effective paragraphs, and we want to prove that effective paragraphs are not the result of an indiscriminate accumulation of sentences. Just as each part on an automobile has a role to play in its overall operation, each part of an effective paragraph has its contribution to make to the complete paragraph.

Here is an effective paragraph that has been broken down into its individual sentences. These seven individual sentences have been rearranged into a scrambled order. Your task is to put the paragraph back together again.

If the original paragraph really was an effective paragraph, you should be able to identify the order of the sentences with very little difficulty.

Beside each sentence there is a space in which you are to write a number *one* through *seven* to indicate each sentence's original order within the paragraph.

- ☐ All of these are necessary for paragraph unity, because the lead sentence set the stage for the sentences that follow, the summary sentence concludes the paragraph in some way, and the transitions carry the reader along with the flow of the material.
- ☐ This is a critical part of the process of organization, and it must be complete before the writer can begin to develop and to refine his sentences.
- ☐ To achieve unity, the writer must include only that material that relates to the central thought of the paragraph.
- ☐ The result is a logical and meaningful unit of expression.
- ☐ Once the writer has isolated the related material, he must then sequence it logically.
- ☐ A paragraph can be said to possess unity when the reader can advance logically through it without a break in thought.
- ☐ In developing his sentences, the writer must pay close attention to the development of the lead sentence, the summary sentence, and the transitions between sentences.

When you have the sentences numbered in the order in which they should appear in the paragraph, check your responses here.

This is the correct number sequence for the sentences:

6, 4, 2, 7, 3, 1, and 5.

This is the paragraph in its original form:

> A paragraph can be said to possess unity when the reader can advance logically through it without a break in thought. To achieve unity, the writer must include only that material that relates to the central thought of the paragraph. Once the writer has isolated the related material, he must then sequence it logically. This is a critical part of the process of organization, and it must be complete before the writer can begin to develop and to refine his sentences. In developing his sentences, the writer must pay close attention to the development of the lead sentence, the summary sentence, and the transitions between sentences. All of these are necessary for paragraph unity, because the lead sentence sets the stage for the sentences that follow, the summary sentence concludes the paragraph in some way, and the transitions carry the reader along with the flow of the material. The result is a logical and meaningful unit of expression.

If you were able to reassemble the paragraph, you were able to do so only because the paragraph was constructed with a conscientious effort toward relating each part to all of its other parts.

We begin our study of paragraph beginnings on the next page.

The Paragraph Beginning

The paragraph beginning is a critical part. With the beginning, you set the stage for all that is to follow. The selection and development of an effective lead sentence is very important to the quality of your paragraphs.

Lead sentences for paragraphs are generally called **topic** sentences. We will call them that too, but we want to go one step further and break topic sentences down into these two types:

1. **Topic** sentences that introduce the paragraph.
2. **Topic** sentences that establish the mood of the paragraph as well as serving to introduce the paragraph.

Here are two topic sentences. Check the one that accomplishes number two above.

☐ 1. I am now a member of the United States Air Force.

☐ 2. At last, I am a member of the United States Air Force.

The correct response is number two. That response seems to reflect a mood of enthusiasm. You would expect to see that same mood reflected throughout the paragraph that follows such a topic sentence.

Here are several more sentences that could serve as topic sentences. Place a check mark beside all those that serve to introduce the paragraph as well as to establish a mood for the paragraph.

☐ 1. It is high time this country gave up trying to save an undeserving world from itself.

☐ 2. Many sports writers consider baseball to be America's number one sport.

☐ 3. A trip to Mexico during the fiesta season is a never-to be-forgotten event.

☐ 4. My childhood was spent in Boise, Idaho.

☐ 5. A paragraph is a larger unit of expression than the sentence.

☐ 6. Is a republic the best form of government for every nation?

☐ 7. Girls, bless 'em, are largely creatures of habit.

The sentences that serve to establish a mood as well as to introduce the paragraphs are numbers one, three, and seven. Remember this as you write. If your topic sentence communicates a mood, the reader expects and paragraph unity requires that the mood be continued throughout the remainder of the paragraph.

We now go into a study of the paragraph middle, and we will look further at lead sentences there.

The Middle of Paragraphs

The middle of paragraphs is the area in which you support the idea advanced by the lead sentence. For this reason, this area of paragraphs is often called the **support** area. Sentences in this area are called **support sentences.** Which of the following choices does the better job of describing the development of support sentences?

- ☐ 1. Support sentences are developed as logical extensions of the lead sentence. They must relate to and advance the idea of the lead sentence.
- ☐ 2. Support sentences are developed in the same subject area as the lead sentence. They are made to relate to the lead sentence through transitional devices.

Choice number two describes a narrow and all-too-common view of support sentences. The correct choice is number one.

Here are two topic sentences that you have seen before.

I am now a member of the United States Air Force.

At last, I am a member of the United States Air Force.

In the exercises below, we give you two examples of support sentences. Your task is to match the correct support sentences with the correct lead sentence. Write the correct lead sentence in the space provided.

Using the two topic sentences just shown you, match them with the correct support sentences.

_____

_____

Although my experiences in the business world have been varied and numerous, none of these experiences have prepared me for this membership. My membership in the Air Force, then, can be considered the most recent in a long series of employment accidents that began when I picked cotton on my daddy's farm.

_____

_____

Although my experiences in the business world have been varied and numerous, none of these experiences has been more than an annoying interlude in my pursuit of an Air Force career. My membership in the Air Force is a dream come true, and I am sure the Air Force can use my cottonpicking experience.

The first sentence, the simple topic sentence, goes with the straight exposition of facts in the first collection of support sentences. The second topic sentence with its mood of enthusiasm goes with the enthusiastic mood of the second group of support sentences. When properly matched, these support sentences become logical extensions of their lead sentences.

Here is a short paragraph that you have seen before. When you first saw it, it was an effective paragraph. It no longer is because we have modified it slightly. Read it, and tell us what is wrong with it.

> Texas is a hunter's paradise. Fox, quail, and other small game abound in the piney woods of East Texas. In the High Plains of Northwest Texas, coyotes, jack rabbits, and prairie dogs challenge the hunter who prefers the wide open spaces. In the South Texas hill country, numerous small lakes and rivers invite the angler to try his hand at catching bass and trout. In the hills and dry washes of West Texas, the hunter must be constantly alert for desert cats and rattlesnakes as he stalks wild goats and sheep. There is probably no other place in the world in which a diversity of game is so near at hand as in Texas.

We know that the sentence about fishing shouldn't be in that paragraph about hunting. We want you to tell us WHY it shouldn't be there. Tell us in these spaces.

_____

_____

_____

Now, check the accuracy of your response.
You should have said something similar to either of the following statements:
The sentence on fishing is not a logical extension of the idea advanced by the lead sentence.

or

The sentence on fishing destroys the logical continuity of the paragraph.

Here is the sentence on fishing. Could this sentence be rewritten in such a way that it could be made to be a logical extension of the lead sentence and **still be about fishing?** Suppose you try your hand at it.

> In the South Texas hill country, numerous small lakes and rivers invite the angler to try his hand at catching bass and trout.

Rewrite the sentence here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

One of the many ways that it could have been done is to include something about hunting or the hunter in the sentence on fishing.

Like this:

In the South Texas hill country, numerous small lakes and rivers invite the hunter to lay his gun aside and try his hand at catching bass and trout.

Ideally, the reference to fishing should be reserved for another paragraph, but we wanted to make the point that you **must** reexamine your sentences periodically to make certain that they belong in the paragraphs in which you have placed them. If you find that they do not, you must modify them or remove them entirely.

Remember these things:

1. Support sentences must be logical extensions of the idea advanced by the topic sentence.
2. Support sentences must advance the thought of the topic sentence.
3. Support sentences must be logically sequenced and coherent to the reader.

Go on to a study of paragraph endings.

The Paragraph Ending

Most paragraphs have a summary sentence, but, contrary to what the name suggests, summary sentences do not always summarize. A summary sentence can, in fact, serve any one or all of these functions within the paragraph:

1. Restate the idea in the topic sentence in order to strengthen the impact of the idea on the reader.
2. Serve as a transition to a subsequent paragraph.
3. Summarize the material presented in the paragraph.

Here is a summary sentence. See if you can tell which, if any, of the three functions this sentence is performing. Check one or more of the responses that follow.

> And that, dear reader, is why the world will end at precisely noon on the fourteenth of December.

- ☐ 1. It restates the idea advanced by the topic sentence.
- ☐ 2. It summarizes the material in the paragraph.
- ☐ 3. It serves as a transition to a subsequent paragraph.
- ☐ 4. There is no way of knowing what its function is.

The correct response is number four, but it sure would be interesting to see the paragraph, wouldn't it? You can guess that the topic sentence was about the end of the world, but there is no way of knowing for sure. You can, however, often tell which of the three functions the summary sentence is performing when it is seen in the presence of the topic sentence. Here is an example:

THE TOPIC SENTENCE

> Nineteenth century novelists often wrote in the "triple-decker" (three volume) form because their audience was attuned to reading aloud.

THE SUMMARY SENTENCE

> Although Dickens and Thackeray, as we have seen, found this form to be satisfactory, Joseph Conrad, for reasons we shall examine, did not.

Which of the three functions is the summary sentence on the preceding page performing? You may check more than one response.

☐ 1. It restates the topic sentence.

☐ 2. It summarizes the material in the paragraph.

☐ 3. It serves as a transition to a subsequent paragraph.

The correct responses are numbers two and three. Apparently, Dickens and Thackery were discussed in the missing support material, and Joseph Conrad is about to be discussed. It is not always necessary to see the support material to know that it is being summarized by an **effective** summary sentence.

Here is your last exercise in identifying the function of a summary sentence.

THE TOPIC SENTENCE

Current top-level management strategy centers on the improvement of the decision-making capability.

THE SUMMARY SENTENCE

This aspect of management strategy, the delegation of authority, should improve decision-making capability, and it is this aspect of management strategy that we will discuss next.

Which of the three functions is the summary sentence above performing? You may check more than one response.

☐ 1. It restates the topic sentence.
☐ 2. It summarizes the material in the paragraph.
☐ 3. It serves as a transition to a subsequent paragraph.

It is doing all three. You should have checked all three responses.

Remember these things:

1. Summary sentences are not **required,** but paragraphs are usually more effective with them.
2. Summary sentences do one or more of these things: restate the idea of the lead sentence, summarize the material, and effect a transition to a subsequent paragraph.

As a final part of the study of paragraph parts, we want to take you through an exercise in which you develop a paragraph about some period during your life. We have chosen this subject because it is, obviously, the one about which you know the most.

Let's begin by developing the topic sentence. In the space that follows, write an effective topic sentence **concerning a period during your life** about which you would want to develop a paragraph. Some typical lead sentences might be these:

"My earliest memories are of. . . . "
"I was not a happy child in. . . . "
"My last two years in high school were. . . . "
"My day at the recruiting office was. . . . "

Develop your topic sentence here. Think about the organization of your paragraph as you develop this lead sentence.

Now, stop. Does the lead sentence you just developed communicate a mood? If it does, that mood has to be reflected in your paragraph. If it does not, stick to a straight exposition of facts in your paragraph.

In this space, write **four** support sentences to follow the lead sentence you just developed. Remember that these four sentences must be logical extensions of the idea advanced by the lead sentence. **After** you have the sentences written, evaluate them against the check list that follows.

—Which of these transitional devices did you use between your sentences?
☐ Thematic ☐Key words and phrases ☐ Parallel construction

—Is the internal punctuation, if any, correct? ☐ Yes ☐ No

—Did you consciously attempt to control the emphasis within your sentences?
☐ Yes ☐ No

—Do your sentences contain a judicious mixture of the active and passive voices?
☐ Yes ☐ No

—Are your support sentences logical extensions of the lead sentence? ☐ Yes
☐ No

—Is the paragraph in your own writing style? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Now we want you to develop a summary sentence for your paragraph. The summary sentence should do these things:

Summarize the material in the paragraph and
Serve as a transition to a subsequent paragraph.

Although you will not write a subsequent paragraph at this time, *plan* one that could logically follow the paragraph you have written. This will make it possible for you to write the summary sentence that will effect the transition to the planned paragraph.

Write your summary sentence here.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Go back and review your entire paragraph. Use the check list that follows to help you in this review.

—Is all of the material in the paragraph relevant to the subject area? ☐ Yes
☐ No. If it is not, remove it or modify it.

—Do the three parts of your paragraph, the beginning, the middle, and the ending, work together as a unit? ☐ Yes ☐ No. If they do not, modify the parts to make them work together.

—Before you began to write, did you ask yourself who would read your writing and what reaction you wanted your reader to have? ☐ Yes ☐ No.

This, the last section in the text, is the shortest section for an obvious reason. We have given you the tools with which to write effectively, but the rest is up to you. "Writing effective paragraphs" is a highly individualized operation. To see how well you can apply all that you have learned from this text, we have one last writing assignment for you. Since your learning gain in this text will, to some degree, be judged by how well you do in this last exercise, we ask that you write as well as you are able.

You are to write a paragraph that consists of the following elements:

1. The lead sentence that we furnish below,
2. Four support sentences that are logical extensions of the lead sentence, and
3. A summary sentence that restates the idea advanced by the lead sentence.

Here is your lead sentence. Complete your paragraph below.

I am pleased to have been selected to attend an Air University school in residence.

Write your paragraph here.

Here is only one of many ways in which the paragraph could have been written. We offer this paragraph as a guide only. Yours could be entirely different and still qualify as effective writing.

> I am pleased to have been selected to attend an Air University school in residence. Attendance at a resident school has much to offer. It is only in attending a resident school that an officer can benefit from sharing the learning experience with fellow students. It is only in sharing the learning experience that the knowledge gained can be put into its proper perspective. The close association with fellow officers, staff, and faculty members is as much a part of the curriculum as classroom work and lectures. These things, then, the association with other individuals and the insight gained from these associations, serve to convince me that I am fortunate to have been selected to attend an Air University school in residence.

This concludes the text on Effective Writing. We hope that this text represents a profitable learning experience to you, and we wish you many years of effective writing.

SELF-HELP TEST

Effective Writing

THIS TEST is designed to serve as an aid to learning. In it, there are representative problems from most of the subject areas covered in the text. The key to the correct responses in this test is to be found at the end of the test. After you have completed the test, you may check the accuracy of your responses in order to gain some indication of how well you learned from the text. In the answer key, the correct responses are keyed to a page or pages within the text on which you will find the authority for the correct response.

In the following sentences, identify each one as being correctly or incorrectly written. This is to include the correct uses of punctuation and capitalization. If the sentence is written correctly, use "A" as a response in the space provided. If it is written incorrectly, use "B" as a response.

___ 1. With Jones and James Smith was on the basketball team.

___ 2. We played soccer, but we lost the game.

___ 3. He bought shirts, pants, and a coat.

___ 4. John, though tired and sore completed the task.

___ 5. Although he did not need the supplies, Brown requisitioned them anyway.

___ 6. The fighter was a speedy maneuverable airplane.

___ 7. They told the story; we listened carefully.

___ 8. He was very reliable; therefore, we believed his story.

___ 9. Sergeant Jackson, who is 30 years of age; Lt Col Dan Johnson, who is 40 years of age; and Col Bob Lee, who is 46 years of age, are all in excellent physical condition.

___10. They had been stationed in the following countries; Spain, France, Germany, and Japan.

___11. Captain Armon spoke at three clubs: his best speech was at the Elk's Club, but he also did well at the Lion's Club and at the Rotary Club.

___12. The items we needed were: pencils, papers, and envelopes.

___13. Lieutenant Wilson plans on making the U.S.A.F. a career.

___14. Mr. Hook met Dr. B. J. Johnson at the NATO meeting in Brussels, Belgium.

___15. Many Air Force officers stationed in Southeast Asia must work with the army, navy, and air force of South Vietnam.

___16. In this programmed text, we included exercises in the uses of these items:
a. comma,
b. semicolon,
c. colon, and
d. period.

___17. We also included instruction in the following: a. Capitals, b. Abbreviations, and c. Numbers.

___18. Although he was raised in the North, he always traveled south in the winter.

___19. The ten officers from the Army and the five officers from the Navy met for the discussion.

___20. The fourteen Air Force officers were at the same meeting.

In the three sentences that follow, match the verb in the sentence on the left with the verb classification on the right. Place the letter "A," "B," or "C" in the space provided.

21. He is friendly. ____ **A. Transitive verb.**

22. They wrecked the car. ____ **B. Intransitive verb.**

23. John fell. ____ **C. Linking verb.**

24. In which of the three sentences that follow is there disagreement in number between the subject and verb? You may check more than one response.

☐ A. He and I were planning on going.

☐ B. A type of fighters used by TAC pilots are F–105s.

☐ C. Everybody, including the crew members and passengers, were injured.

Identify the four sentences that follow as being in the active or passive voice. Place an "A" in the space provided if it is active voice construction, and place a "B" if it is passive voice construction.

____25. Results are requested immediately.

____26. We tried to apply the solution.

____27. The subject of a sentence will perform an action with an active verb.

____28. A passive verb can be easily recognized by a writer.

29. Which of the following sentences best describes the proper use of the passive voice? Place a check mark in the space provided.

☐ A. You should never use the passive voice.

☐ B. A judicious mixture of the passive voice with the active voice is desirable.

☐ C. The passive voice should be predominant in military writing.

In the three sentences that follow, match the verbal in the sentence on the left with the classification of the verbal on the right. Place the letters "A," "B," and "C" in the spaces provided.

30. The embattled outpost was saved. ____ **A. Infinitive.**

31. To save the outpost, the defenders fought well. ____ **B. Participle.**

32. Saving the outpost was uppermost in their minds. ____ **C. Gerund.**

33. Which of the following statements about smothered verb construction is NOT true? Place a check mark beside your choice.

☐ A. Smothered verb construction involves the use of certain words that appear to have been verbs altered by the addition of a suffix such as "-tion" or "-ment."

☐ B. Smothered verb construction almost invariably increases the number of of words in a sentence.

☐ C. You can often identify an individual word as being a smothered verb.

34. Identify the sentence of the three that follow that has smothered verb construction. Place a check mark beside your choice.

☐ A. The examination will be a 150 question, multiple- choice test.

☐ B. He will conduct the investigation of the accident.

☐ C. James worked hard on the assignment.

35. Of the following four sentences, which contains the proper use of pronouns? Indicate your choice with a check mark.

☐ A. Neither Jones nor Smith has gone to their appointment.

☐ B. Jackson and Wills were approached to head up his own team.

☐ C. When Doc tried to put the spare tire on, it slipped off the jack.

☐ D. The audience was restless during its long wait.

36. Which of the following sentences does NOT have a faulty use of a modifier? Place a check mark beside your choice.

☐ A. While eating a sandwich, the bread fell apart.

☐ B. With a little care, you can write well.

☐ C. During the meeting, I felt that Brown could not be trusted.

☐ D. When a modifier is used in a sentence, it should not be misplaced.

37. Of the following three statements, which is the most accurate concerning sentence length? Place a check mark beside your choice.

☐ A. In military writing, you should use sentences that are of the right length to convey the desired message.

☐ B. In military writing, you should not use short sentences because this would insult your reader.

☐ C. In military writing, you should not use long and complex sentences.

38. Which of the following named items would NOT normally be used for transitions within or between sentences? Place a check mark beside your response.

☐ A. Modifiers.

☐ B. Punctuation marks.

☐ C. Conjunctions.

☐ D. Key words and phrases.

39. Which of the following statements about conjunctions are true? Indicate your choices by a check mark in the spaces provided.

☐ A. A coordinating conjunction, with its associated punctuation, is used to effect a transition between sentence parts of equal value.

☐ B. A coordinating conjunction, with its associated punctuation, is used to effect a transition between sentence parts of unequal value.

☐ C. A subordinating conjunction, with its associated punctuation, is used to effect a transition between sentence parts of equal value.

☐ D. A subordinating conjunction, with its associated punctuation, is used to effect a transition between sentence parts of unequal value.

Match the writing step in the left column with the phase of paragraph development in the right column. Place an "A," "B," or "C" in the blank provided.

40. Answer the question, "Why am I writing?" ____
41. Conduct research. ____
42. Select and develop an effective topic sentence. ____
43. Develop support sentences. ____
44. Limit the subject area. ____
45. Decide on a subject area. ____
46. Select a pattern of presentation. ____
47. List ideas relative to the subject. ____
48. Develop a summary sentence. ____
49. Answer the question, "Who will read it?" ____
50. Group ideas under specific headings. ____
51. Answer the question, "What reaction do I want my reader to have?" ____

A. Planning to write

B. Organizing to write

C. Developing paragraphs

Match the pattern of presentation in the right column with the descriptive statement in the left column. Place an "A," "B," "C," or "D" in the blank provided.

52. Advance an idea or support a position. ____

53. Chronological flow of events. ____

54. A general statement followed by a list of details, examples, quantities, or specifications. ____

55. Used to describe people, places, things, or events. ____

A. Topical or enumeration pattern.

B. Reason or problem solution pattern.

C. Time pattern.

D. Space pattern.

56. Which of the following four choices is NOT one of the basic structural features of a paragraph? Indicate your choice with a check mark.

- ☐ A. Support material.
- ☐ B. Internal transitional devices.
- ☐ C. Summary sentence.
- ☐ D. Topic sentence.

57. Which of the following four statements about support sentences is NOT correct? Indicate your choice with a check mark.

- ☐ A. Support sentences must advance the thought of the topic sentence.
- ☐ B. Support sentences must be developed in the same subject area as the topic sentence.
- ☐ C. Support sentences must be logically sequenced and coherent to the reader.
- ☐ D. Support sentences must be logical extensions of the idea advanced by the topic sentence.

58. Of the following statements, which is NOT correct concerning the function of a summary sentence? Indicate your choice with a check mark.

- ☐ A. A summary sentence may serve as a transition to a subsequent paragraph.
- ☐ B. A summary sentence may restate the idea of the topic sentence.
- ☐ C. A summary sentence may summarize the material presented in the paragraph.
- ☐ D. A summary sentence may serve only one of the above purposes at a time.

ANSWER KEY FOR SELF-HELP TEST

1.	B	Page 7	21. C	Page 49	41. B	Page 105
2.	A	Page 8	22. A	Page 49	42. C	Page 114
3.	A	Page 9	23. B	Page 49	43. C	Page 115
4.	B	Pages 10 and 11	24. B & C	Page 51	44. A	Pages 103 and 104
5.	A	Pages 12 and 13	25. B	Page 52	45. A	Page 103
6.	B	Page 14	26. A	Page 52	46. B	Pages 108 and 109
7.	A	Page 18	27. A	Page 52	47. B	Page 105
8.	A	Page 19	28. B	Page 52	48. C	Page 118
9.	A	Page 20	29. B	Page 54	49. A	Page 103
10.	B	Page 25	30. B	Page 64	50. B	Page 107
11.	A	Page 25	31. A	Page 62	51. A	Page 103
12.	B	Page 26	32. C	Page 66	52. B	Page 109
13.	B	Pages 31 and 32	33. C	Page 68	53. C	Page 109
14.	A	Pages 31 and 32	34. B	Page 70	54. A	Page 109
15.	B	Page 33	35. D	Pages 75 – 78	55. D	Page 109
16.	B	Page 34	36. B	Pages 81 – 84	56. B	Pages 114 – 119
17.	B	Page 34	37. A	Pages 87 and 88	57. B	Pages 116 – 117
18.	A	Page 36	38. A	Page 94	58. D	Page 118
19.	A	Page 42	39. A & D	Pages 95 and 96		
20.	B	Page 42	40. A	Page 103		

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